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ZZAP! 64

MONTHLY REVIEW FOR COMMODORE SOFTWARE



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ZZAP! 64

ISSUE 11 MARCH 1986

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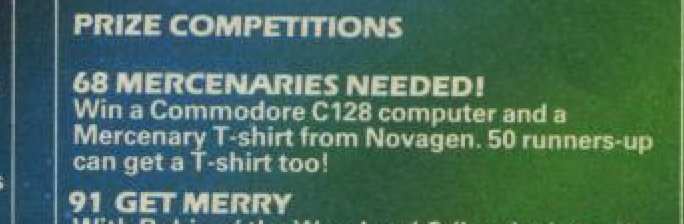
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HOT GAMES FOR MARCH

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action



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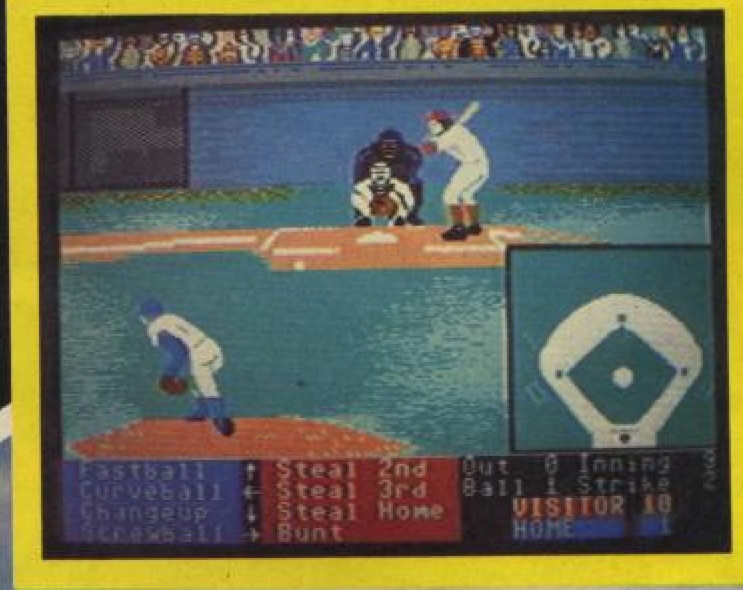
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ZZAP! ED





BEING MUM

Photo by Andrew (Jimmy) Wright



PULLING THE PLUG?

News that Commodore are shutting down their Corby factory and stopping manufacture of the 64 in Britain hardly comes as a surprise to anyone following the spate of official denials that any such thing was about to take place. We all know that the best way of informing the world of an impending action is to deny out of the blue that you intend acting.

But the closure probably has caused some alarm among Commodore 64 owners as well as people whose living depends to some extent on the machine. After all, Commodore's fortunes have slipped internationally very badly during 1985 as well, resulting in all sorts of rumours and counter-rumours. The American company had hoped to scupper any gloomy predictions for 86 by launching the 128, Amiga and the new disk drive as well as by renewing support for the 64. However, when you look at the major market, the 64 market, the 128 and the Amiga have very little to do with it. On top of that, the C16 has to feature as one of the most puzzling developments in the entire business. It's doing well, say pundits and sales charts — as well it might, bundled cheaply with loads of software, and doing the chain stores stirling business no doubt; but the trouble is that it's a dead end. The quickest way to kill off someone's enthusiasm for a machine is to give them one that they don't really want at the end of the day.

Commodore have signally failed to notice that in the British market (and elsewhere) they have been outmanoeuvred and outpriced. Instead of delivering new and irrelevant machines at the lower end of the price range, they should have been prepared to lower the price of the 64 to wholesalers to bring it into line with Amstrad, Atari and Sinclair products. They should also have concerned themselves with a reliable and faster disk drive system a bit sooner.

So much for the failings of the past, what happens next? The good news is that the 64 isn't dead — far from it. No doubt new machines will now be shipped in from Germany (and perhaps that also means they will be more reliable than the British assembled ones)! On the other hand, it's hard to see how that will mean a lowering of the price, still the main barrier to better sales. It looks as though 64 owners will have to continue being loyal to a machine marketed by a company whose complacency in the past has endangered their immediate future.

BEING MUM

Still, enough of the ridiculous, onto the sublime; lots of people having visited Domark in the past have phoned to say that Gary Liddon (once credited with being tea boy there in C&VG magazine) can't make tea. This slander has upset our wonder at the keyboard (and seriously affected his morale when it came to this month's Challenge). Fortunately ZZAP! ace cub reporter Andrew Wright (the Activision man who resembles Jimmy Sommerville of the Communards) popped his head round the kitchen door the other day during a visit and snapped this candid pose of the man for whom posing is never too much trouble. It puts a lie to the slander. I ask you, could anyone looking so supremely confident make rotten tea?

INDEX TO SOFTWARE REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR



ZZAP! RRAP

The post-Christmas mail bag has been simply terrifying. Upstairs in Postal Sorting (or PS as we call them) there are still loads of unsorted envelopes, so sorry if you get missed out. What did pass my coffee table desk turned out to be an unusually rich mixture of praise, abuse, puzzlement, despair and arrogance — business as usual then! I'm normally tempted to pick a serious subject as letter of the month, but the combined ZZAP! team (with the sole exception of Gary Penn, for reasons that will soon become obvious, chose this one this time . . .

LETTER OF THE MONTH

BAD BOY PENN

Dear ZZAP!
My friend and I have been doing some pretty hefty research recently and have arrived at arrived at an horrific conclusion . . . It's about one your reviewers, Gary Penn. This Penn person has the cheek to be leading a double life. And not even tell us about it!!

You see, to get to the point we not only know that he is leading this mysterious double life but we have actual reason to believe that we are sure of the other person's identity! (scandal)!!

. . . Would you believe me if I said it was

. . . AAAAGGGgghhhhhhh. . . .

I can hardly bring myself to say it . . . George Michael of WHAM! (I feel incredibly sick after that!)

If you are one of those cautious people of the world then cast your eyes on the juicy evidence below . . .



Gary Penn caught here during daylight hours doing an advert for Abbey National Building Society.



Gary Penn (alias George Michael) seen here after sunset in a sleezy nightspot in London. (He's only posing because he knows he's being photographed)

So, the question being asked Gary, 'Are you also George Michael?!

We rest our case.
James Kerr & William Campbell, Nitshill, Glasgow
PS Sorry Rockford for cutting up the old mags.
PPS The enclosed evidence is GP wearing his disguise.

What can we say? Our Mr Penn vehemently denies your allegation and goes to great lengths to point out that he doesn't have a black eye. Still, he seems very knowledgable about Wham. He sings their songs in the office as well (it has a destructive effect on morale). There's no smoke without fire as they say . . .
LM

I DON'T BELIEVE IN HAIRIES

Dear ZZAP!
I am not the first person to mention the following points and queries (no I don't mean Rockford and Rignall in particular) but they are a terrible pair, so DO NOT just chuck this letter away somewhere or ignore some of these questions that are regularly posed by other readers.

1. Why is it not possible to print the release date of certain games? Please don't give me any (cont on pg 202) junk as I have found in recent mags that you seem to avoid the question.

2. Stop criticising other less fortunate computers which we will not mention as it is annoying other readers and is a total waste of space. We all know how the SPACTRUM (no spelling mistake), is a useless pile of junk but we could use this paper for printing more tips. Also stop moaning about the Fairy One. Oh sorry HIPPY, I meant Hairy One.

3. Why take certain games off the ZZAP! challenge! Even if there have been tips for these games published in ZZAP!, I'm sure that when everybody else out there is honest enough to say whether they have cheated or not. If their score is obtained using a cheat then the score will be remembered and not printed.

PS Who are these half-brained Amstrad Owning Whimps who say that the Commodore is a dying machine? In the last few months I have convinced four people not to buy a certain junk machine and to buy a better one. Namely the Commodore. I'm sure that is one thing that Julian Rignall cannot beat.
Mark Haydon, Chingford, London

It's not always possible to print the release dates of certain games for the simple reason that we can't always find them out. Simple huh? We do not criticise other computers, and considering the space you have wasted doing just that, we hardly need to, do we? As to the honesty of ZZAP! readers when it comes to high scores, we all know they're as honest as the day is long (which isn't very in Britain in winter).
LM

THEY DON'T BELIEVE IN FAIRIES

Dear ZZAP!
HELP!!!

I've got BIG BAD SKOOL TRUBBLE! No one at skool will believe that there 's someone living in my computer. I constantly tell them, but they just tell me I'm mad. It's probably because they're Spectrum owners (Uggh!) and there aren't people living in Spectrums. Please, please can you send me something to prove that there are people living in computers, or at least something to console my sadness.

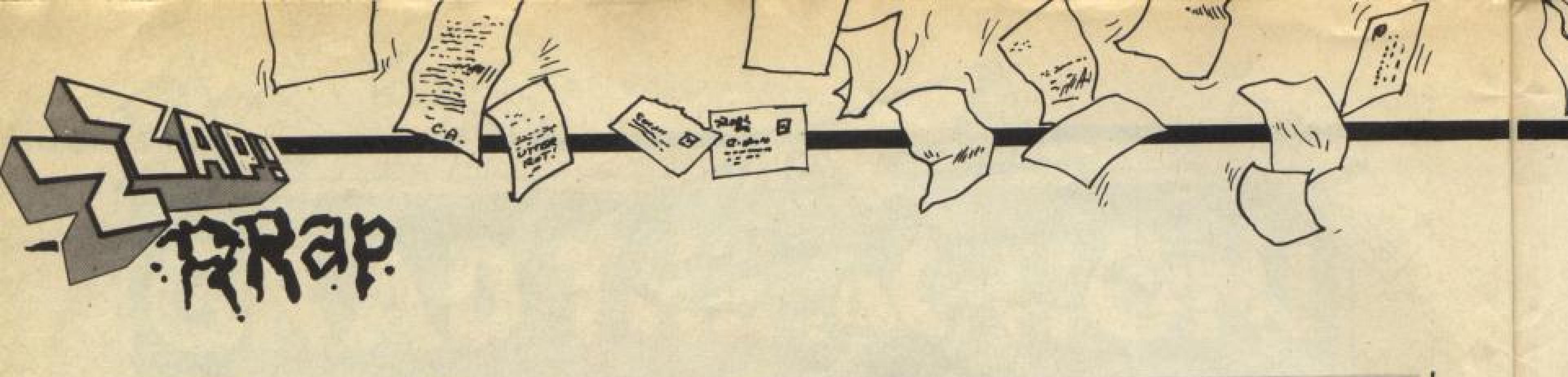
PS I don't own a disk drive (Hint!!)
Charlie Mason, Caister, Lincoln

What you need is a copy of ZZAP! issue 6, 7 and 8. The preview, review and interview. If this fails to convince your friends then nothing will. Probably part of their problem is their disbelief — every time someone says, 'I don't believe there's someone living inside your computer,' another Little Computer Person dies. This is, of course, all complete garbage, but get your friends to explain why it is that cars always go better when you talk nicely to them.
LM

THE POINTILIST SCHOOL OF LETTER WRITING

Dear ZZAP!
Upon reading through your Christmas Special edition of ZZAP! I came across an advert (pg 14) which was for Thor software. The advert was illustrating *The Arc Of Yesod* and *I.C.U.P.S.* Now in your review of *Robin Of The Wood* Gary Penn said that Odin's next release, the *The Arc Of Yesod* would also be of such a high quality. Either you have got your adverts wrong or Gary Penn is off his rocker. Could you please tell which is true or what is actually going on?
Darren Perin, Hatfield, Hants

First there came Thor (mostly noted for Spectrum releases), then came Odin — same people really — now they've reinstated the Thor imprint, so Gaz isn't off his rocker really.
LM



COMPUNET CONUNDRUMS

Dear ZZAP!
I have seen the special offer you are doing with Compunet and the Commodore modem and on reading it I noticed something which puzzles me, in fact two things that puzzle me. The first one I noticed while reading about all the things available on Compunet and the section 'What you'll get out of Compunet'. Here it says that you can use the service for up to 6 hours each three month period. I mean, if Compunet is as good as it is said to be then how on earth are you supposed to make use of the services if you only have half an hour a week in which to use them? And how can they stop you from using it for longer? (Phew)

The other question is: Does the £9.99 for the ZAP CLUB include three months for Compunet? Also can you just have the three month Compunet subscription without paying for the ZAP CLUB? If so, how much is it?

Well, if you remember all that you have just read then maybe you can give me the answers.
R Warnett, Catford, London

This was an offer set up for ZZAP! readers together with Compunet. You aren't bound by it if you wish to deal with Compunet directly. With this special offer, you are paying for the barest minimum involvement as a taster. It would cost you more going through 'normal' channels.
LM

SOME POINTS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

Dear Lloyd,
After writing to you on several occasions in CRASH, I have been forced to write to you at ZZAP! due to unpublication of my missives.

But fear not, all Commodore lovers (commies!), I come not to bury the Commodore, but to praise ZZAP! (Quotation from Julius Computer by William Milkshake). I bought ZZAP! at issue 7 and saw for myself how the other side lived. I was impressed by ZZAP! but a few nagging points glowed in my mind. Here is my list of improvements.

1. Put ZZAP! Sizzlers and Gold Medals in colour, as CRASH Smashes are. It gives the mag an extra flair and shows immediately which games are good.

2. Have an adventure chart like CRASH.

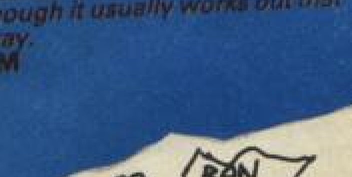
3. Publish more maps.

4. Kill the prannet who killed Adam.

5. Have a Bug Box for the cartoons in the letters section, as in CRASH.

On the subject of maps, nearly all of the maps I have seen in ZZAP! seem to be taken from CRASH. This presents no problem if the game is a good one, eg *Shadowfire* but in one case, *Sabre Wulf*, the map was published when the game was a stinker. In CRASH maps are only published if the game is a CRASH Smash but *Sabre Wulf* was awful and yet the map was published. I will end my letter here. And by the way, if you do send me something for this letter I will give it to my Commodore owning friend.
Owen Lewis, Jesmond, Newcastle

So sorry not to have published any of your CRASH missives before — must have been an oversight, but see how much nicer we are in ZZAP! In general all the Sizzlers etc are in colour, or at least they are intended to be, but as I've had to explain before, the colour has to be finished before the mono, and sometimes a great game comes in just too late to make it into colour. What do we do? Ignore it until next month, or put it in mono? The question of an adventure chart is one we should now consider, I'll put it to the powers that be. Maps? Well, yeees, they have sometimes come from CRASH and sometimes they've gone the other way. There was never any intention in CRASH to only publish Smashed game maps, though it usually works out that way.
LM



ENTER — THE HUYTON MOB

Dear ZZAP!
What's the cotton-picking matter with you? What are you doing? On page 53 of your Christmas Special there is an article about Compunet. Now don't get me wrong, I'm all in favour about Compunet but when you devote a full page to it, that's when I got annoyed. It could have been used for a test or a competition or another ZZAPstick.

So if you don't want the wrath of the Huyton Mob to come down on you, you'll do something about it, eg pull your socks up (if they're falling down) and get more tests in, or a section on Arcade games.

Finally, is Gary Liddon trying to make himself sick or is he a canibal, when he sticks his finger down his throat (page 15 *Imhotep*) and is Gary Penn turning into a mind reader (same page).

White Wizard - Brill
Julian Riggers - O.K.
Gary Penn(oilhead) - O.K.
Gary Liddon - Worse than Wogan
Sean Masterson - 5/10 for trying

Simon Breedon, Huyton, Merseyside

I fail to see why you're upset. A whole page isn't much space in a 172 page magazine and a lot of readers are interested in it. As for Mr Liddon, he is definitely sick. And yes, Mr Masterson is trying — very trying.
LM

A DESPERATE CASE

Dear ZZAP!
Please could you give me details of where I can purchase a decent drum synth for the 64? I have been asking around my area but no one knows anything about one.
P Pridmore, Dyfed, Wales

The last issue of ZZAP! carried a Datel Electronics ad and they have a digital drum synth, so I suggest you try them. Datel Electronics, telephone 0782 273815.
LM

HELP PLEASE

Dear ZZAP!
I am writing to you to ask about two important points, about a program that I am writing.

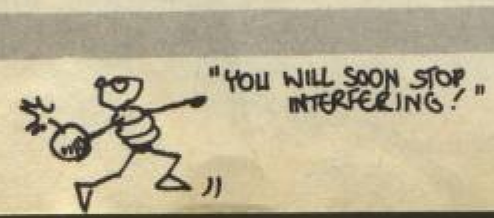
1. Where is the character set on the Commodore and can I change it?

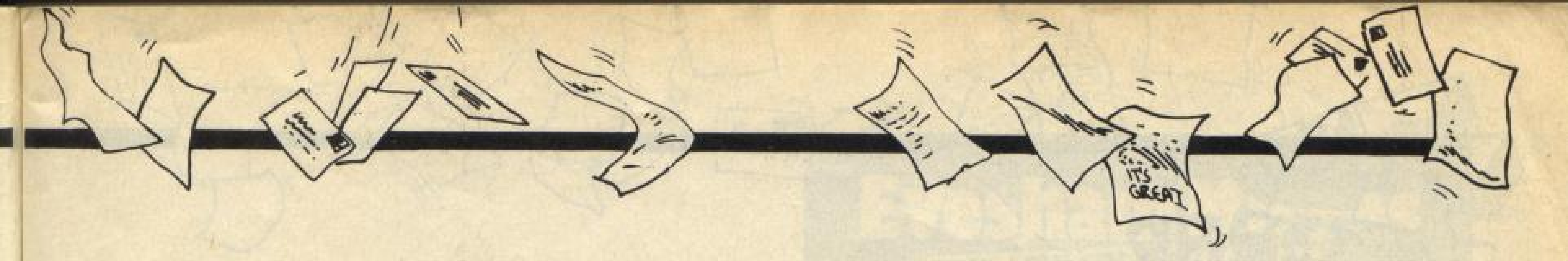
2. Is there a method to scroll the whole or part of a screen in any direction?

I would be very grateful if you could send me any information concerning the above points.
Nigel Say, Chestnut Grove, Clevedon

Okay Nigel, this isn't much in my line so I'll hand you over to the tender mercies of Mr Lounge Liddon . . .

When the 64 is powered up the character set is held in ROM, so the thing to do is to get the Commodore to think its character set resides in RAM. The way to do this is to poke the location 53272 (hex $D018) with the right number. Character sets can sit on any 1K boundary. So to get a character set to start at 8192 (8 times 1K) you must POKE 53272, (PEEK (53272) AND 248) OR 8. To scroll the screen the best thing to use is the X fine and Y fine registers at 53270 (hex $D016) and 53265 (hex $D011) respectively. This is very complicated and there's no real way to use these from BASIC, the only thing to do is have a hack at machine code. Hope that makes things a bit clearer.
GL







SOME POINTS

Dear ZZAP!
Your mag is reasonably good, the best in fact (get away from that bin), but please stop criticising twelve year olds. We are easily as intelligent as your average sixteen year old, even though this letter hardly shows off my typing skills. Mangram's lucky with his Hermes compared to this wreck. Anyway, I have a few points to make so I'll number them.

1. I'd like to tell the nurd who wrote in to complain about your coverage of Compunet, I use it, and it is far more enjoyable than continuous gaming.

2. Will you please give ratings not just for graphics and sound but include definition, animation music and FX.

3. How about rating previews but whilst making it obvious that they are still PREviews.

4. Do not slag off Big K. If you are related to any mag, it's that one. It is really obvious from your readers letters.

5. Update the cartoon reviewers' faces sometime. Penn's hairstyle is so different now that you can't recognise him.

6. What's this recent spate of Aussie letters????

Razjaz Johnston, Jordanhill, Glasgow

1. Without looking it up (I can't remember all the letters, and it does help when you refer to someone's earlier letter to print the issue and page number), I can't remember whether the correspondent in question was complaining about our lack of Compunet coverage (unfair) or the fact that we cover it at all.

2. You've no idea how hard it is to work out the current ratings without adding to our poor reviewers' burdens.

3. The principles remain the same — a review is a critical appraisal and can be rated. A preview is exactly that, an early and generally uncritical look ahead. NO ratings.

4. Would I slag off a mag we're related to? (Are we)? No, the general concensus is that we're not related at all, apart from from that city slicker southern lounge lizard Liddon (but that's only because he wrote for the rag — and only he knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men).

5. Perhaps we should update the reviewers' cartoon faces — Art?

6. What's wrong with Aussie letters?
LM

GET RID OF THE ADS

Dear ZZAP!
Who do you think you are? I would have thought that you being a highly intellectual computer mag (for the best computer I must add), you would not have these adverts plastered all over your pages. But I must stress that you are not the only computer mag to do so. Please could you stop this as I have to resort to ripping them out and covering my school books with them.

Michael Young, Keynsham, Bristol

Michael, without the ads there would be no ZZAP! Selling the magazine covers the printing cost but hardly pays anyone for their work. It's simple economics, sorry.
LM

HEARTS OF US GOLD?

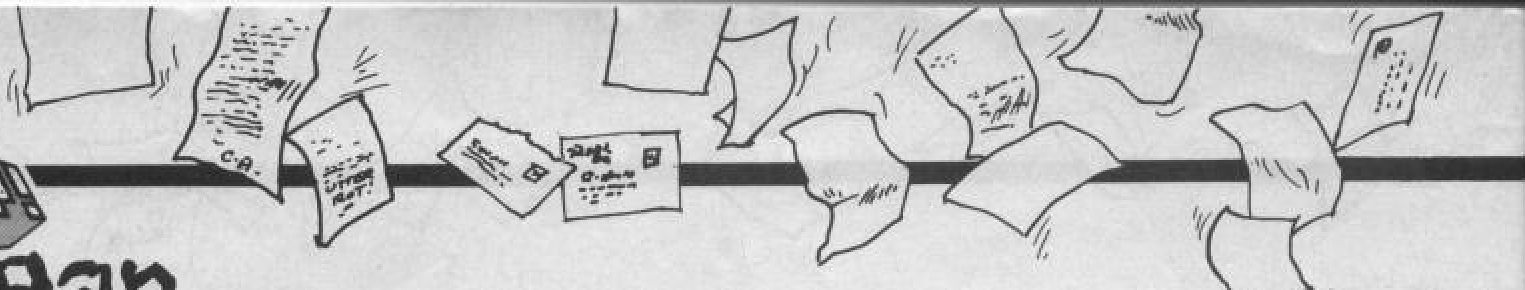
Dear ZZAP!
After a reply to a letter that I sent US Gold/Centresoft, I thought that I had to write and tell your readers of the rough treatment I received from the company. I have recently had a disk drive as a present and wished to upgrade some of my software titles from the US Gold range onto disk, but the company refused to offer this service point blank although I was willing to to pay the difference in price from cassette to disk. They said that if they were to offer this service, they would end up with a large amount of software that they would be unable to sell, but if I have done my maths right, they would not be out of pocket. As it is illegal to resell software, US Gold expect me to fork out another fifteen quid in order to obtain the disk versions of their programs. It seems to me that rather than condemning software piracy, they are condoning it with their 'couldn't care less' attitude, so if anyone from US Gold is reading this, please get your finger out and do something for the people who are keeping you in business.

Please supply my name and address with this article in the chance that someone from US Gold may want to get in contact with me.

John Alsop, Fairfield House, Bridle Rd, Stanfree, Chesterfield S44 6AP

Their reply hardly seems to constitute 'rough treatment'. In fact their 'contract' with you was to supply working cassette-based software, which apparently they have done. That you now own a disk drive isn't their immediate problem at all. However, you may be right in surmising that it might be in their better interests to help you upgrade, especially if they are not out of pocket at the end of the day. However, I am only too well aware (I can hear our mail order department yelling) of how much work this sort of thing can cause a company not geared up to it, and reluctantly agree with their attitude, in that you probably haven't even begun to consider the ramifications (Long Word Dictionary) for US Gold.
LM

ZZAP! RRAP



POB HWYL

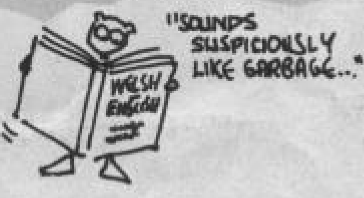
Dear Lloyd,
Just a quick letter to say thank you for such a good Chrimbo edition, and to say a very well done to Jazzels Rignall for quoting Welsh.

We in Wales do appreciate people having a go at it but to get a full sentence right deserves a round of applause from everyone.

Just one quibble, how about some more tips? Julian and Co play more games than anyone else so how about contributing eh lads?

Pob Hwyl
Tim, Colwyn Bay, Clwyd

It seems only fair to let Jaz reply: Diolch yn fawr iawn, Tim. Rydw i'n hoffi siarad cymraeg — dydy'r saeson ddim yn cofio (Heh Heh)! Dydw i ddim yn ysgrifenni cymraeg yn da iawn, ond ydy magazines arall sairad cymraeg (maen nhw'n twp iawn).
JR



FLOOD OF DISKS

Dear Ed,
Could somebody please ask the software houses what's going on? Why are we getting this sudden deluge of disk-only games? I mean, how many people own a disk drive but not a cassette deck? If the game accesses the disk drive during play then let's have something like *Beach Head 2*. We can also save games on blank tapes. People who can't get hold of the Activision *Little People Discovery Kit* will undoubtedly get very cross.
Robert Hunt, Bradford, Yorks

The obvious answer is, buy a disk drive. It always surprises me, the reactions of people. There was a time on the Spectrum, for instance, when everyone complained that no suitable disk drives existed. Here's the 64, complete with disk drive and all the advantages that brings, and some marvellous product on disk, and you want to complain about it. The whole point with the drive is the accessing of program to make games that can't sensibly fit on cassette. With most popular games software houses have gone out of their way to produce cassette versions where possible. Little Computer People ARE on cassette anyway.
LM

EXCELLENCE PERSONIFIED

Dear ZZAP!
To get the boring stuff out of the way first, your magazine is certainly the best around at the moment, other than maybe CRASH, but you already knew that.

The point is, what exactly gives you the edge over the veritable plethora (see Lloyd's long word dictionary) of the other magazines? Of course there aren't as many now as there were a short time ago, but even so, standing head and shoulders above the opposition is no mean feat.

I think there are two main reasons — the first one, so obvious that I hardly feel I should mention it, is your review format, handed down from CRASH with just one or two small changes. You CAN'T review a game in too much depth, especially with game prices at their present extortionate rate.

Incidentally, £10.00 is too much to pay for a game unless it's of the *Zork* standard — and it's plain silly when JR/GP or any other Garies who happen to be about the place, describe a ten pound game as 'cheap' - and it's happened more than once recently.

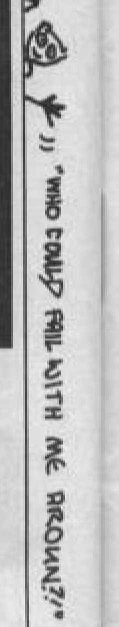
Anyway, to get back to my point. The second feature that lifts ZZAP! above its competitors is the personalisation of everything. You know, it really makes a magazine much easier to get into. Having read previous reviews by various members of the team makes it possible to relate to that person's views of a new game.

So, to improve ZZAP! the first thing to do is to drop the pretentious 'White Wizard' pseudonym, and give us a real adventure columnist. It' significant that the only part of C&VG that stands up against ZZAP! is the only non-anonymous C&VG writer.

The *Elite* competition was rather brilliant too, more like that instead of the wordsearches would go down well I think.

Keep up the good work and don't go bust
Michael Taylor, Bishop's Stortford, Herts

Thanks for the compliments, Michael. I've met the White Wizard and believe me, he's not in the least bit pretentious. And he certainly doesn't want to change his name.
LM



THE CHEATERS POEM

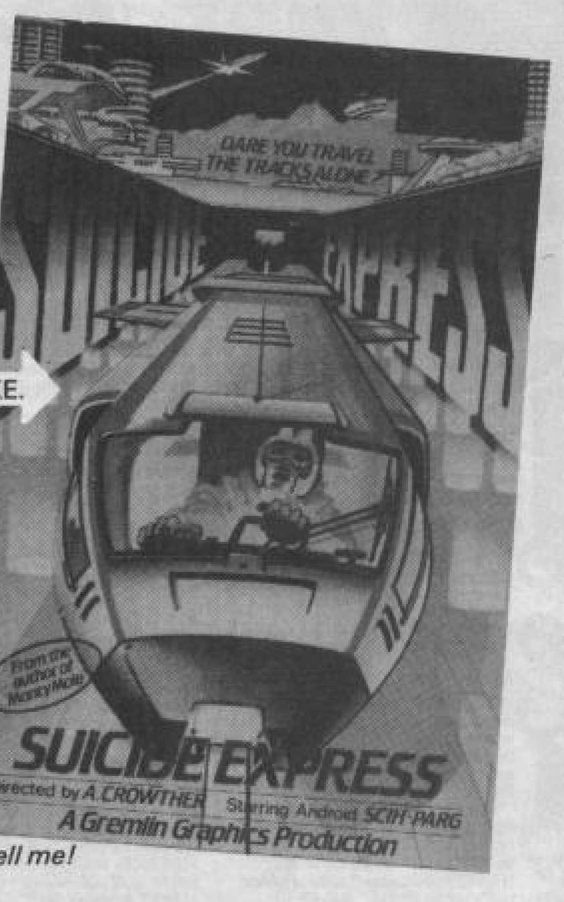
Why do we cheat, that's the question we ask
Generally it's because, too great is our task
It could be saving the world from Thargoids and the like
Or touring round France on an Activision bike.
To me the games of today are are too hard
So every POKE I get get I put on a card
With platforms too high and aliens too fast
Now losing to them is a thing of the past
Whilst loading a game, from my meager collection
I insert a few POKES for the ultimate protection
No game is now safe, for there's always some bloke
Who'll sit down and and work out out that life saving POKE.
With a train speeding fast, I chose *SUICIDE EXPRESS*
I POKED it apart and finished without stress.

Once I tried *Zaxxon* and try as I might
My little jet fighter would not stay in flight
But now when I play, all I do is type RED
Now it's the aliens, not me who finish off dead.

My latest buy, it is really good fun
But now I can cheat, even Monty On The Run,
To do this with Monty is no mean feat
For when on the high score table type
I WANT TO CHEAT

Dave Brown, Tyne and Wear

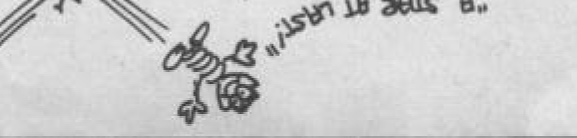
Never trust anyone who's honest enough to admit that they're dishonest — that's what my old ma used to tell me!
LM



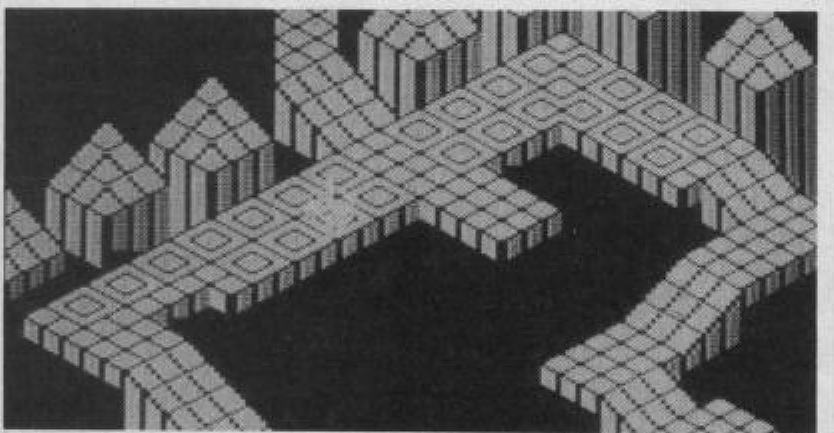
PLEASE PRINT!

Dear ZZAP!
Is it true that you only print typed letters, or that a letter only has a 1 millionth of a chance of getting printed? Take this letter for example it has not been printed. Please, please, even if you don't print this letter, (which you won't anyway) could you please reply with the details on how to get a letter published?
PS Could you ask Robin Candy to print some POKES for *Monty* that work?
PPS Please could you alter all my thousands of spelling mistakes only I am not very good at spelling?
PPPS Please print this letter.
ZZAPingly
Chris Shay, West Drive, Bury

No sweat, Chris, as we used to say in the old flower power days. One printed letter, all mistakes corrected. There's no single way to get a letter printed in ZZAP! because they just come from a vast pile every month. I just pick em. By the way, what's all this Robin Candy stuff? No one at ZZAP's ever heard of him.
LM



GYRO BUG



Dear ZZAP!
Not so long ago I bought *Gyroscope* by Melbourne House. When I got it home everything seemed to be working perfectly. When I reached level 3, shock, horror! There was no finishing hole. I loaded it again and this time there was a hole and I got onto level 4..BUT..when I died the game was crashing and putting me off course so that when I moved I died. The next day I took it back to the shop and the bloke there gave me another. When I got home it was the same thing again, no hole, throwing me off the track etc. I eventually exchanged the game for *Pet Person* and am well chuffed.

Why don't Melbourne House check these things? I have two friends who both had the same problem, one of whom was lucky enough to get it debugged. Do you know of anyone else with the same problem?
Ste Addison, Thornaby, Cleveland

Seems like quite a few people got caught out with this one, including Melbourne House. The first batch of cassettes all had the bug, which was very quickly remedied. It shouldn't happen of course, but sometimes it does . . .
LM

FLATTERY OR PLAGIARISM?

Dear ZZAP!
I am a religious reader of your magazine, so much so that I have only missed one issue of ZZAP! (the first) and that was because I never knew you existed. However, I did read it eventually after some near bloodshed, trying to get it off a fellow reader. Now I can never put your mag down.

I wonder if I might ask a question though?

Do you often read other top competitive magazines like C&VG and . . . C&VG? Because they put down some very interesting things about ZZAP!

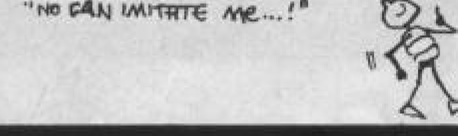
eg: In the Christmas Special issue on the bottom left hand of page 35 and also on the top right hand corner of page 35, they quote some of your very own words on *Mercenary* and *Little Computer People Discovery Kit*.
eg: Another quotation on page 27 of **Wizardry**.
eg: Using your ratings on the Euromax Joysticks on page 45.

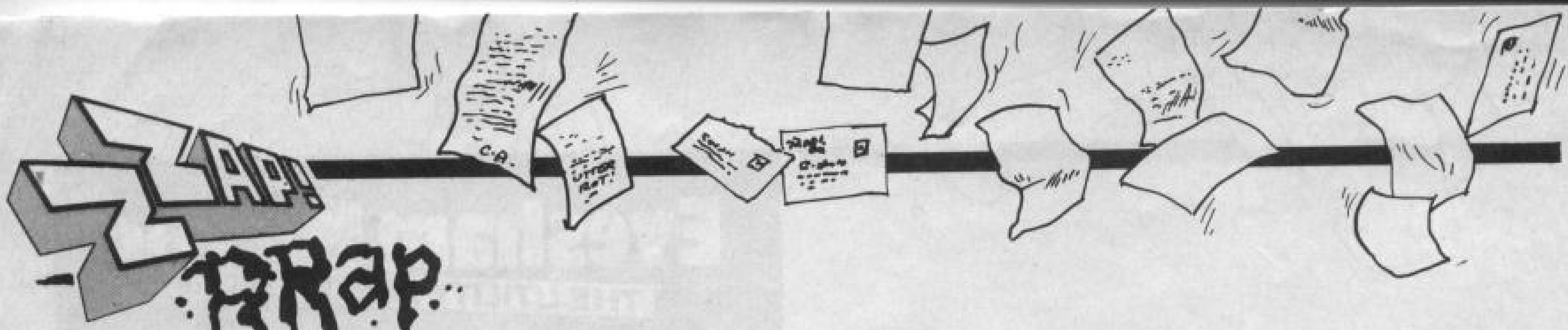
Then they publish a whole page of Oliver Frey's work on *Beach Head II*.

Now what I am getting at is whenever other magazines are mentioned in ZZAP! (not always but mostly), it is to slag them off (pardon the expression). I am not saying you shouldn't though, because all magazines are inferior to ZZAP! and need slagging off, but maybe you shouldn't be so hard on them. Besides, they are still learning, eh!
Jim Robinson

'Slagging off' another magazine!? Have we ever? As a matter of fact the editorial team usually buy most of the other mags just to see what they are up to. The quotes you mention above are not 'interesting things' that C&VG have said about ZZAP! at all. Like us, C&VG have advertising, and they can't control what the advertiser chooses to say in their copy. What you are referring to are official ZZAP! quotes and are ones which have been used in comments. The reason for doing this is that advertisers feel that punters might be persuaded to buy a game if it is 'endorsed' with a ZZAP! comment praising its excellence. You might be getting confused between advertisements and editorial. If you take the 'All American Adventure' ads as an example, they are presented in a format that gives them the appearance of an article.

On the other hand, imitation is the highest form of flattery you know.
LM





MISTREATED JOYSTICK

Dear LLoyd,
JR claims to have bought a Quickshot II that lasted a mere three weeks. I bought a Quickshot II about a year ago when I had a Spectrum. I am now a Commodore owner and my joystick is still going strong, having survived *Airwolf*, *Bugaboo The Flea* and *D.T.'s Decathlon* (notorious joystick killers all) on the Spectrum and the *Elite* on the CBM (dangerous), I therefore conclude that his stick was faulty or mistreated.

While typing this letter I noticed that pages 98-99 displayed the name AMTIX in the bottom corners instead of the more customary ZZAP!. Is this some new type of ultra-subtle advertising campaign?

Well I've got to go now as I think that my Little Computer Person is about to commit suicide! Bye for now.
Roger Cragg, Beeston, Nottingham

How right you are! JR just doesn't know how to treat a joystick, but then you can't really blame him because he had a hard childhood. The 'page bottoms' mix up was an art slip up. The rarified atmosphere on the top floor of ZZAP! Towers (where exists 'Art') sometimes goes to their heads and they forget where they are. The Ludlow gibbet has been busy recently . . .
LM

IS IT ALL TOO MUCH?

Dear Lloyd,
Just one or two questions, if you don't mind. What's with the sudden flood of special features? All right, so it was Christmas but didn't you think that you could space out three programmer interviews a bit? And how do you decide who wins the competitions? I mean it would be a bit inconvenient if I won the trip to see around ZZAP! Towers so do you fiddle it or just hope for the best?

Oh, by the way, don't you know what month it is? How can you release the February edition of the magazine on January 9th? Even in darkest Ludlow there must be a calendar somewhere. Is there or are you all deprived or illiterate?
Juigen Fittmar, Ashkley Park, Belfast

If it's a shortage of interviews you're worried about, don't be. There will be plenty more in upcoming issues of ZZAP! As for a calendar — you have to be kidding. The nearest thing we deprived natives of Ludlow have to a calendar is Mr Western's production schedule. It has to be obeyed. However, it's a time honoured tradition to release magazines with the following month's cover date — don't ask me why!
LM

INSULTED INSOMNIAC

Dear ZZAP!
It is now three o' clock in the morning, and I can't sleep - your fault.

Why do you have to print all those letters that keep me from my beauty sleep? Point is, I'm a Spectrum owner who enjoys ZZAP! (and Jaz Gazzagaz) except when I read letters that tell me that the Speccy is a doorstopper and the like. People who actually sit down and write such things to be printed in a magazine must be incompetent thickheads (not to mention YOU for bothering to print them).

Now that I've got that off my chest I may sleep fairly well, except for one thing.

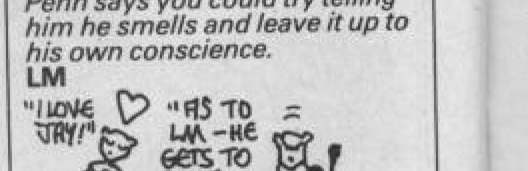
I almost ripped my hair out when I saw that you sent Scott Cooper free games, (I bet that you signed them too!) - Oh no, here comes mum babbling about missing sleep. I think this means goodnight, as I am tired - Yes mum, I'll turn it out now - click!
Jannik Aagerup, Kornmarken, Denmark

Strictly speaking, we don't approve of Spectrum bashing. It is fairly pointless. But there are always some people who feel that in certain cases a comparison is called for and this almost inevitably ends up with the other machine taking a knocking. We try to keep it in order though. I think you missed the point about Scott Cooper. We sent SPECTRUM software — to his brother. You see, there is justice after all.
LM

MORE ROCKFORD

Dear ZZAP!
I think that Rockford is fab. I haven't seen a single letter praising the little fellow yet I think that he deserves it so please give him mine. He should have his own page with cartoons. Oh yeah, when is *Yie Ar Kung Fu* coming out? The BBC has got its copy out so hurry up and release it. Also I think that you should have a poster of Rockford and could someone tell me how to make my Pet Person to have a shower?
Jay Vardy, Stevenage, Hants

You can't have seen the first few issues of ZZAP! We were flooded with letters praising him (and other ones we won't mention). Rockford gets quite enough space as it is. As to your Pet Person and his washing habits, it's rather up to his personal character, but Gary Penn says you could try telling him he smells and leave it up to his own conscience.
LM



So much for March, time to trudge through Ludlow's slushy, snow-ridden January streets (and you think you have problems with magazine cover dates)! The steep hills round here won't allow my bicycle to operate despite the special snow tyres. Such is life. See you next month when it might be warmer, in the meantime, the address to write to is ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.





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MARCH



MERCENARY

Novagen, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick with keys



After many news stories, previews and much press hype, a copy of the legendary and until now mythical *Mercenary* has wended it's way onto the ZZAP! office desk. The delay was due to a few complications in getting the program off an Atari and into a Commodore along with certain code modifications to increase and enhance the general speed of the program. Now all that's done it's just up to us to review it, well here we go:

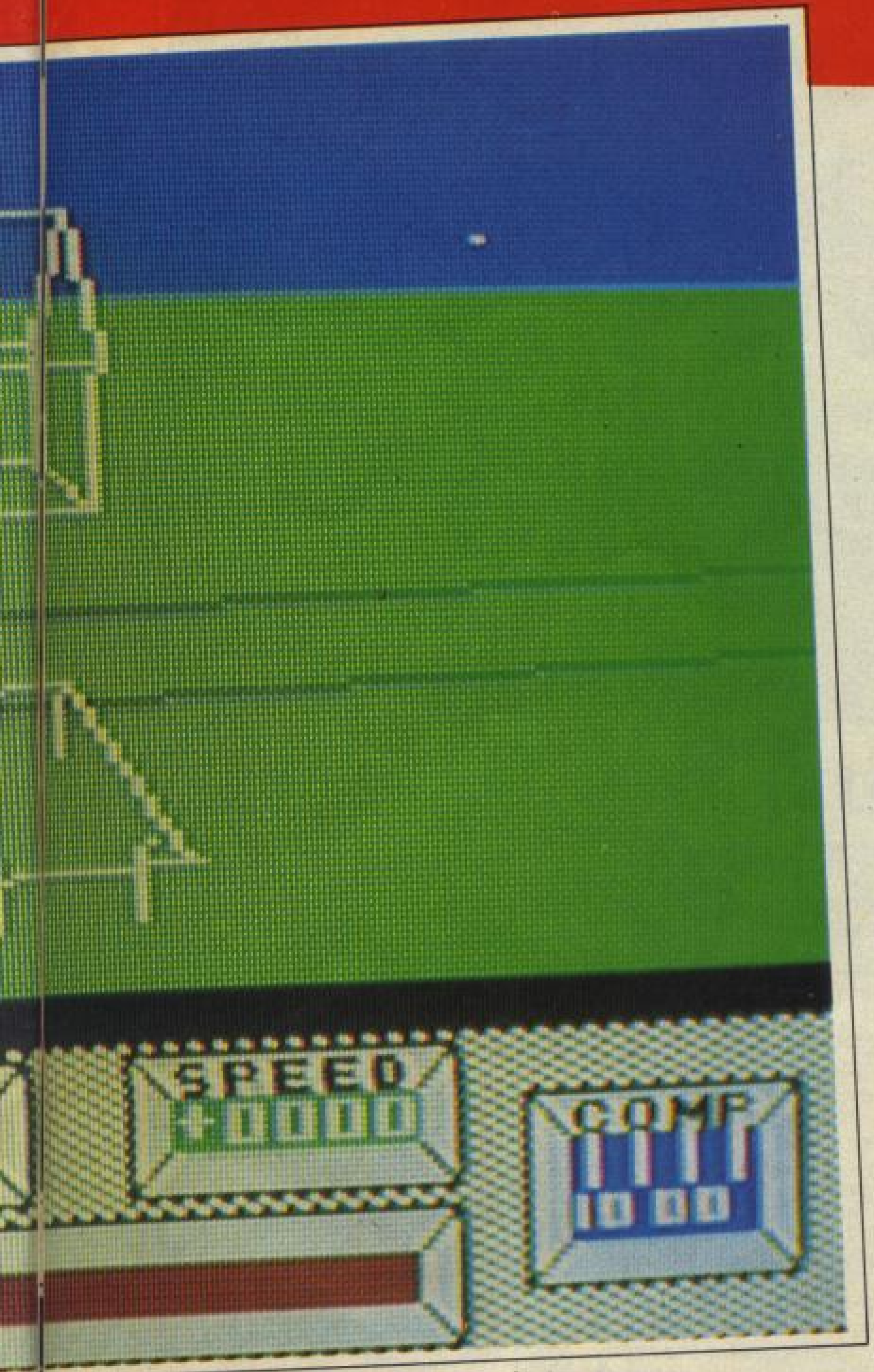
The main play area of *Mercenary* is centred on the planet Targ, a world containing two races at war. The original inhabitants of Targ were the Palyars, a peaceful sentient species who led a contented existence until the arrival of the Mechanoids. Mechanoids are strange creatures in that they are not organically based and are an alien race of robots. Because of their warlike nature, the Mechanoids soon defeated the Palyars and are currently the dominant race on Targ. Most of the planet is a barren wasteland, the only major centre of population being a huge metropolis that at first appearance looks very sparse indeed. There are highways and roads linking the odd interesting structures but most of the actual city is housed underground forming a complicated subterranean complex of tunnels and caverns. This city is now in Mechanoid control.

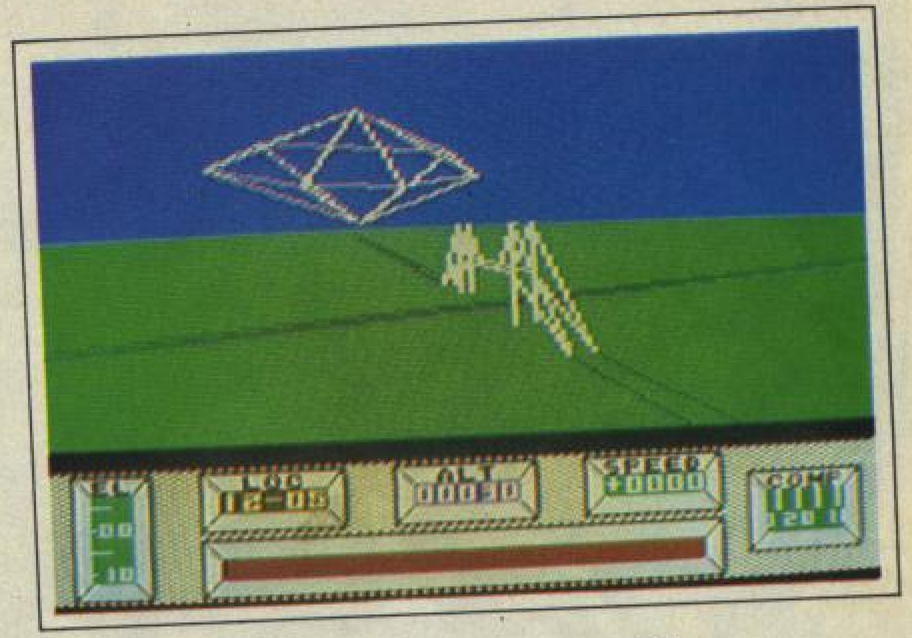
The Palyars are not completely defeated though. The Palyar War Council and the majority of their population live in a colony craft that hovers high above the city. Though a few pockets of resistance still exist on the planet they are easily controlled by the Mechanoids.

You enter the scenario when, through a mechanical fault, your ship **Prestinium** crashes on Targ. The role to be played is that of a 21st century soldier of fortune, a mercenary through and through. Since the Prestinium is damaged beyond repair a new ship powerful enough to leave Targ must be found. The trouble is acquiring such a transport — ships like that cost money and your pockets aren't exactly jingling. What you do have though is Benson, a ninth generation personal computer. He acts as your interface with the outside world, providing a 3D vector interpretation of the scene around you plus navigational information. Once on Targ, Benson relays the minimal amount of information in his data banks.

The main appeal of *Mercenary* is that there are various ways of achieving the end goal. The most obvious is to act as a freelance fighter for either Mechanoid or Palyar. Reaping the rewards of such a role it should be quite simple to get enough money for a ship to take you off planet. If this is the role you want to play then you'll need a craft of some sort to get around the planet. Such a ship is







located close to the crash site. Benson relays a message asking if you'd like to buy the ship. *Mercenary* plays just like the real world and instead of buying the ship you may choose to steal it, risking any retaliation from the vendor.

On screen there's the head up display fed to the monitor from Benson. When the program boots up, the game has you sitting in space with a starfield in front of you. Benson activates the ship's Novadrive but after a few seconds thrusting, a malfunction develops. The Prestinium still has considerable forward momentum and when a planet looms into view even maximum reverse thrust isn't enough to stop the ship from crash landing. Once crashed you are given full manual control. Everything is shown in vector graphics, with the ground and sky filled in green and blue respectively. Along the screen's base is a control panel that shows your compass bearing plus elevation. A small window is also present for relaying any of Benson's comments to you. Using the joystick it's possible to move around in the fundamental eight directions (the keyboard is used to quite a large extent as well). The outside view updates as you move in true perspective.

To steal the ship, just walk over to it and press B for 'Board'. Once in control of a craft the joystick function changes considerably. Left and right rotate the craft around its centre while up and down tip or dip the ship's stern. The keys one to zero along the top of the keyboard control the machine's engines with zero delivering the greatest thrust. Once inside an aircraft just thrust of in the direction you wish to travel then pull up. Landing requires a small angle of approach and a relatively slow velocity. Once on the ground and not moving, L for 'Leave' puts you back onto the ground to walk around once more. Pressing shift in conjunction with one of the thrust keys, a negative power boost is supplied.

On the bottom control panel is also a grid counter showing your position on the planet. The first message received instructs you to make your way to location 9,6 and then get to the conference room. At 9,6 there's a hanger (these allow you to enter the subterranean city through an elevator contained in them). The whole ship can be brought through the elevator, all you have to do is position yourself in the middle of the hangar and press E to activate the lift ('Elevator')?

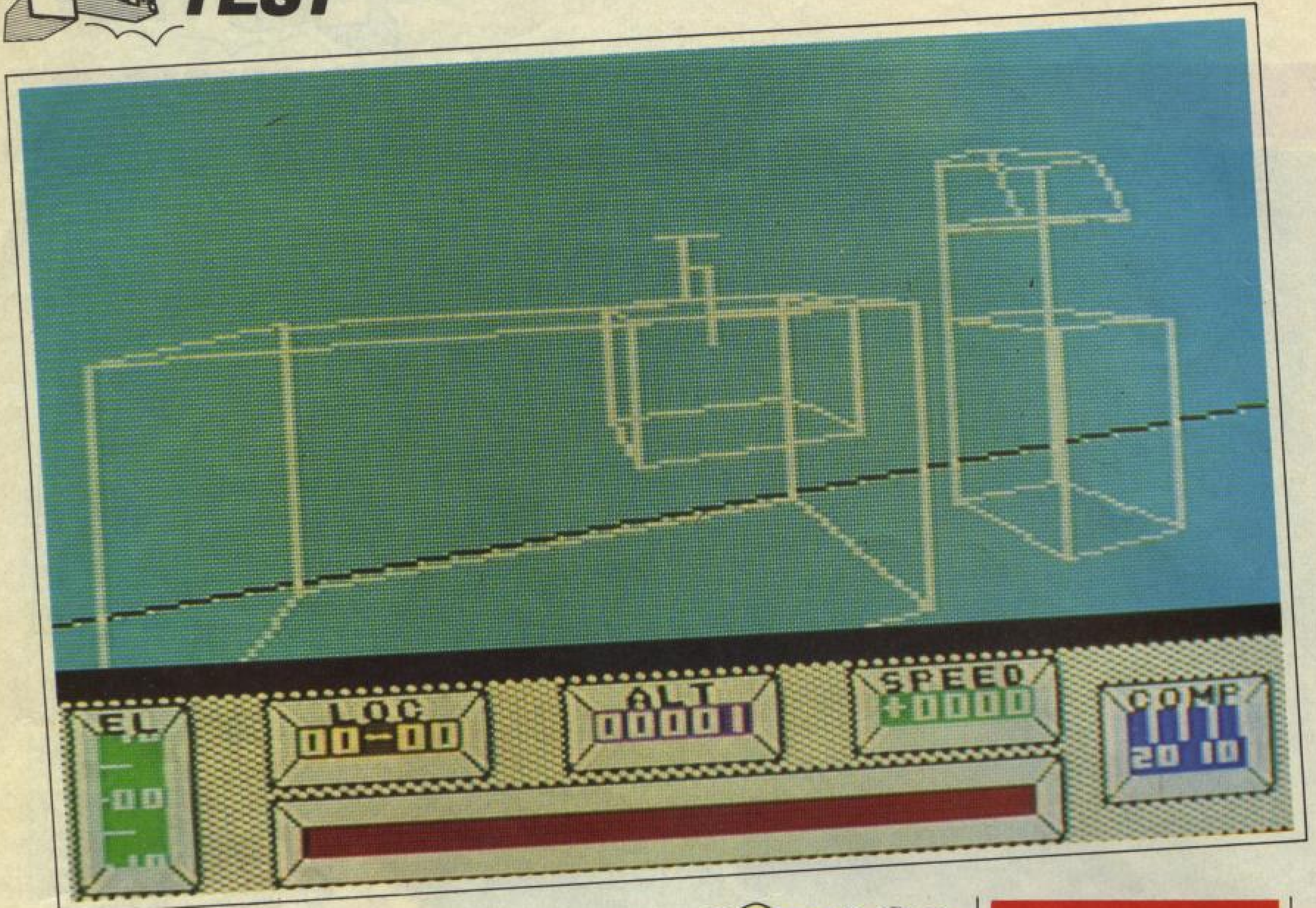
Once inside the city it's necessary to walk about rather than use the ship. From the main hangar a number of corridors branch off into the metropolis. Each corridor has a door at either end and to walk through one just walk headfirst into it. Most doors are oblongs but a few are differently shaped. Trying to bump your way through one of those doors results in the message LOCKED flipping across your scanner. A key takes the form of a large three di mensional object in the same basic shape as the door it opens. When collecting a key P is used to pick up and D for dropping. This applies to all the objects that may be found around the place. Mind you, only ten objects can be carried at once.

Once you get to the conference room a message from the



Mercenary *has certainly taken its time in appearing on the 64, but it's definitely been worth the wait. Seldom has a game kept everyone at ZZAP! glued to a monitor for so long, but* Mercenary *deserves every second devoted to it. The game has incredible depth, and even if it is solved it is always possible to return to Targ and escape with even more credits and better equipment (remember the saved data disk tape).*

The graphics are exceptional, the vectors make Elite *seem like a BASIC program and* Starion *like, well* Starion*! The depth of the game is incredible —* Mercenary *has massive potential which is only realised through playing it. It's relatively easy to solve, but there is still an immense game waiting beyond that point, it'll certainly take a long, long time before anyone escapes Targ with the maximum credits and equipment. If there is one game which is worth buying then it is this —* Mercenary *is about the best computer game ever to be written.*



Palyars is relayed via Benson. They say that the delivery of certain Mechanoid items to the Palyar colony craft will result in a hefty cash reward from them. Also they say that a 'very special gratitude' will be awarded if all traces of Mechanoid occupation is removed from the planet.

Getting up to the colony craft isn't that easy as most of the craft found on the surface aren't powerful enough to reach the Palyar's fortress in the sky. The ship that can reach it is carefully hidden. An alternative route to the city is by finding some way of boosting your own ship's power with the correct piece of equipment. Getting to the colony craft is only half the problem since a key is also needed to enter. Various items when placed in certain rooms result in financial gain. The most rewarding act is to deliver the leader of the Mechanoids to the Palyar debriefing room. If enough credits are accumulated then a Novadrive ship can be be hired from Hertz spaceship hire but it's still a case of being in the right place at the right time. This isn't the only way of completing *Mercenary*, there are three in total, but the other two are a bit of a mystery.

Throughout the game there are a number of amusing aspects including a Commodore sign and an Atari one. A congratulatory message appears on shooting the Atari sign but Benson calls you a traitor for knocking out the Commodore sign. Also in the city is a huge billboard with Encounter written on it: 'You have just destroyed . . . the authors advert . . . from now on . . . things will be . . . even tougher', you are informed on its destruction. *Mercenary* does seem to include everything, even a kitchen sink, which can be found in the colony craft.



Paul Woakes' previous offering, in fact his first: Encounter, *was a simple, but exceptional, shoot em up which unfortunately failed to make any impact due to a distinct lack of coverage. Thankfully,* Mercenary *has been received with far greater interest and it certainly deserves the acclaim, since it is one of the most exciting releases ever to appear on the 64.*

Mercenary *is thoroughly enjoyable to both play and map (useful) and is incredibly easy to get into — addiction is almost guaranteed. It has enough depth to maintain the initial interest, with three ways of finishing the game and the constant challenge of improving your final score. There is also plenty to explore and the many amusing and generally neat little touches throughout the game, make it all that more fun to play. The high quality of the graphics is evident from the comments made by my colleagues, so I shan't say anything more on the matter other than they are brilliant (the graphics, not Sean and Julian) as is the game itself.*

Presentation 95%
No options as such but features such as Benson and the excellent, atmospheric title sequence that gets you straight into the game — literally, make up amply for this apparent deficiency.

Graphics 98%
Fast, effective 3D vector graphics.

Sound 67%
Some very good sound effects, but little else.

Hookability 97%
Incredibly easy to get into since 'you choose the action'.

Lastability 99%
Lots to explore, three ways of completing the game and the ever present urge to improve that final score.

Value For Money 97%
Just under ten pounds for an alternative way of life.

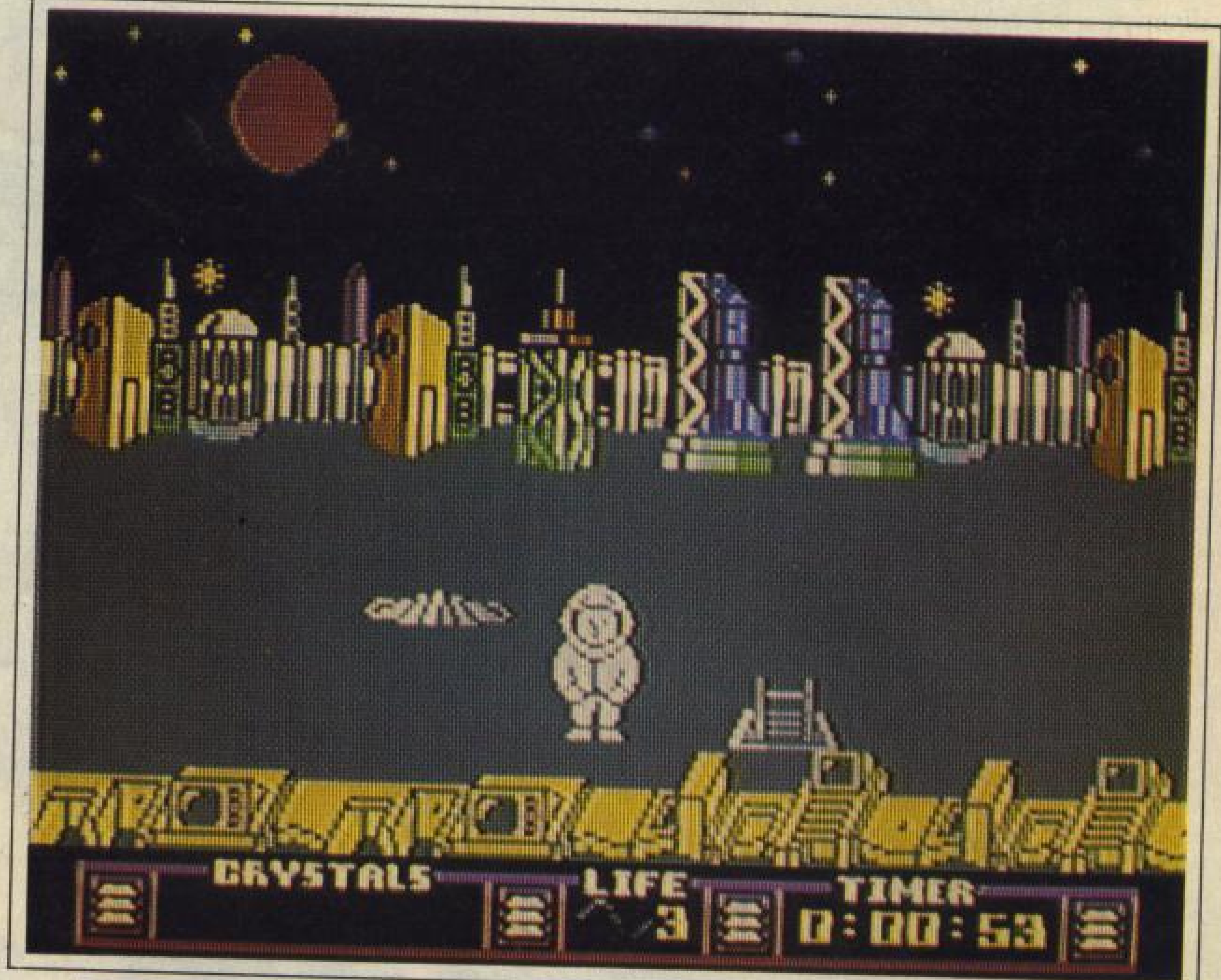
Overall 98%
A classic.


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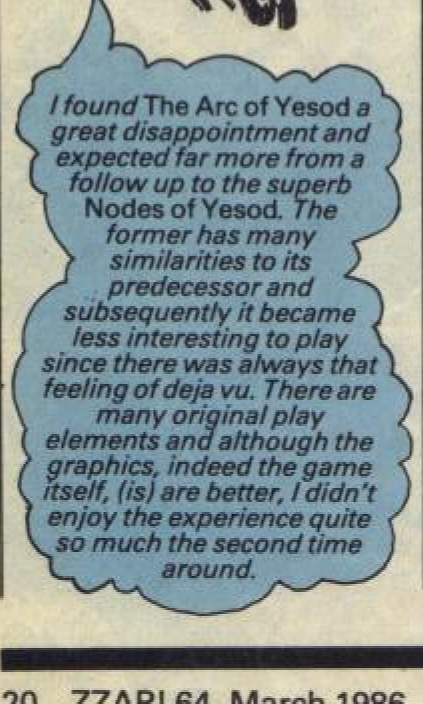
ARC OF YESOD

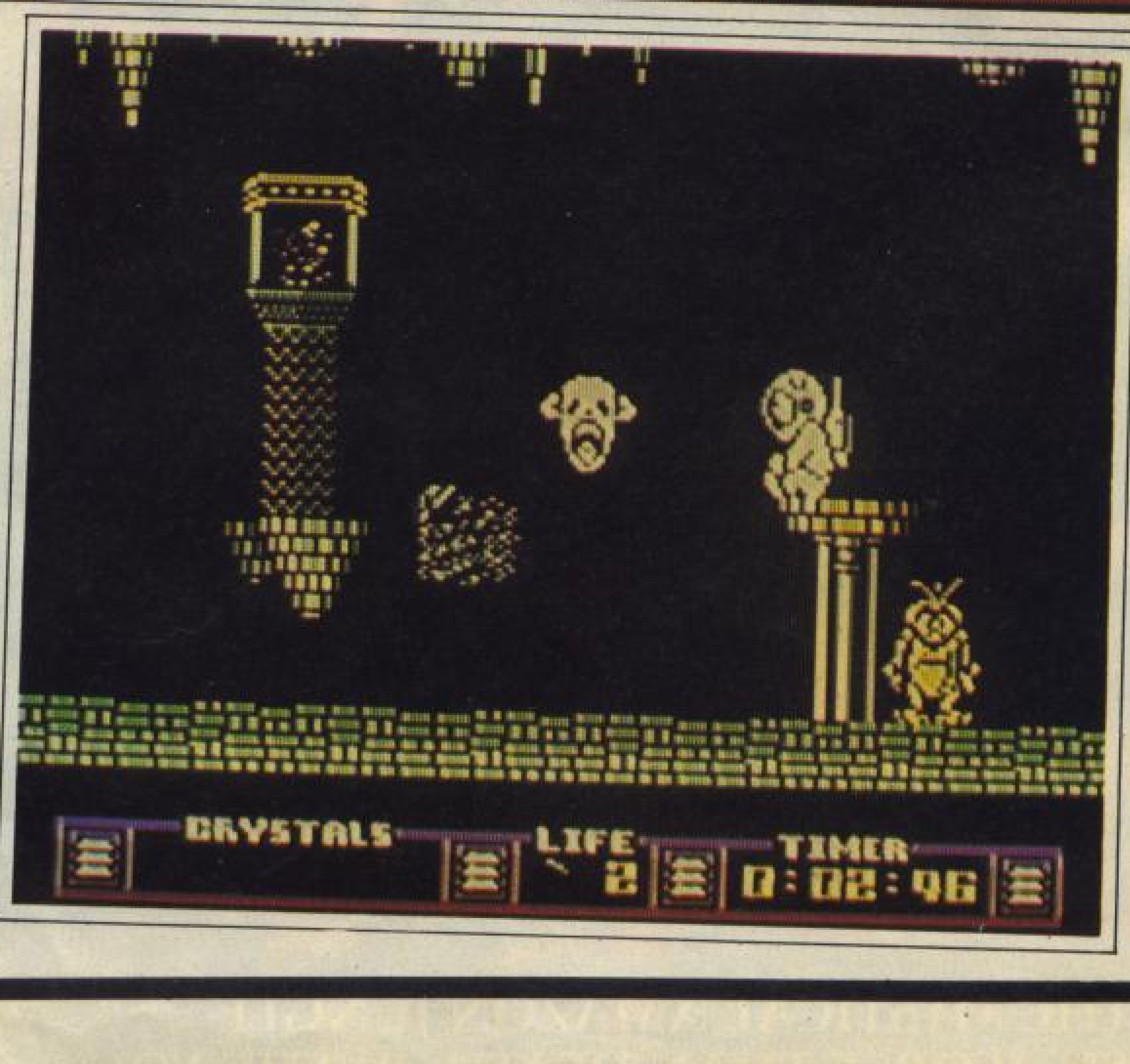
Thor Computer Software, £8.95 cass, Joystick and keys

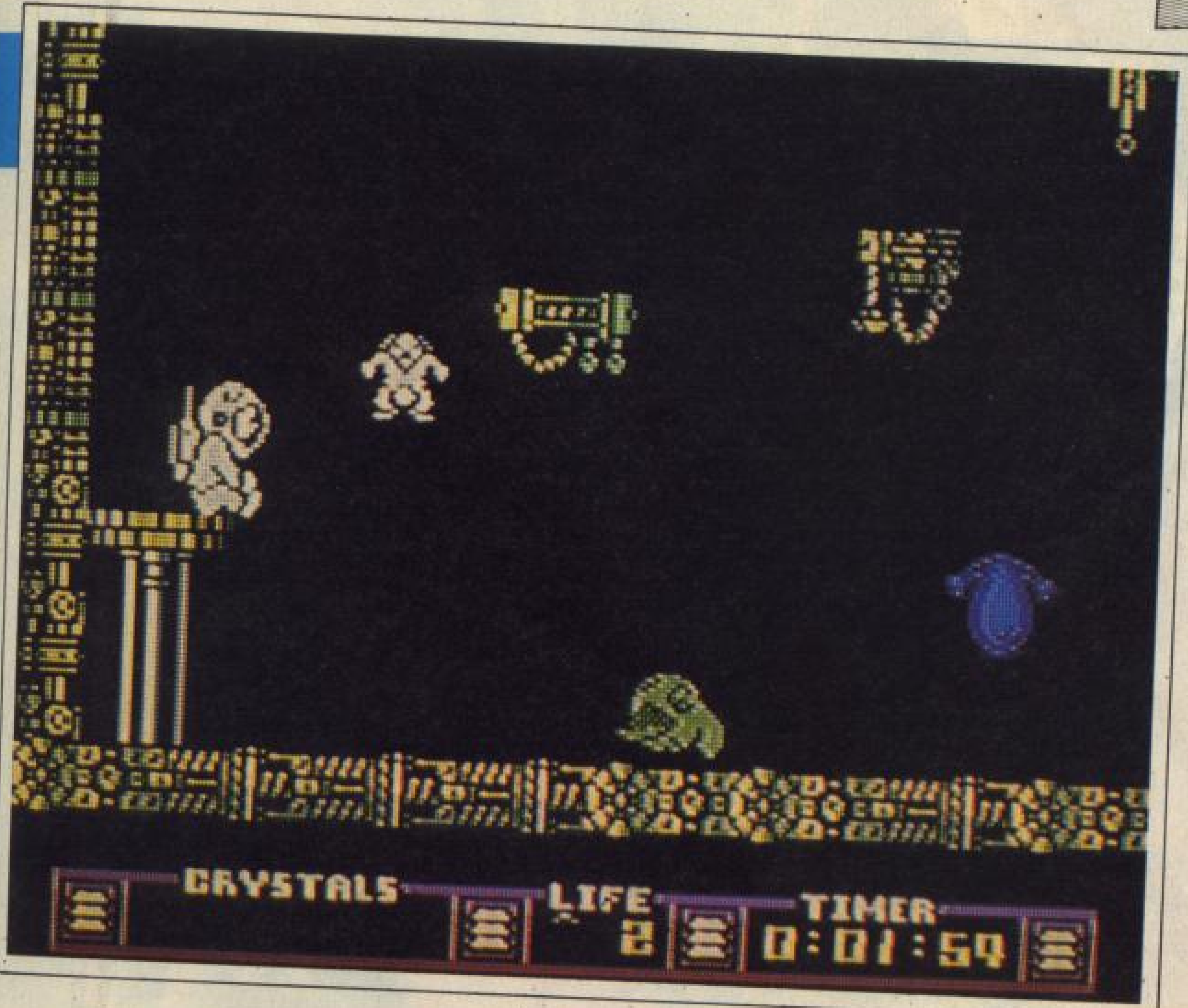


Several months ago, in the near future, strange signals were being emitted from the Moon by an unusual transmitter. But what did they mean and who was behind such an act? The International Commission for Universal Problem Solving (or ICUPS for those of you who prefer acronyms) were interested, so much so that they enlisted the help of the Rt Hon Charlemagne Fotheringham ('but you can call me Grunes Charlie'). Charlie unwittingly took on the daring deed and took off immediately on an epic journey to explore the *Nodes of Yesod* and locate the source of the signals. After a great deal of torment from the maze-like cave structure of the Moon and the hostility of its inhabitants, he did so. And although what Charlie found wasn't quite expected, it didn't come as any great surprise . . . A large black slab of unknown origin and composition, the Monolith, was transmitting vital data, pertaining to the vulnerability of Earth's defences, to someone, somewhere deep in outer space. But who, and more importantly where . . . ? Charlie promptly returned to his home planet and a hero's welcome, and the incident was soon forgotten by all . . . all but ICUPS, whose duty it is to worry about such things.











Despite Thor's attempts to plagiarize their own product (ie Nodes*)* Arc of Yesod *is an excellent product in its own right. Comparison to* Nodes *are really unavoidable because of their similarity and* Arc *is a great deal more playable. The graphics have even surpassed* Nodes' *excellent standard. The large detailed figures are beautifully animated and look very realistic. The gameplay itself is very similar to its forebear though the challenge is far greater since the map is larger and there are a lot more hidden passageways. I didn't like the mechanical equivalent of the mole, it just wasn't as cute! Overall a truly great game and if you liked* Nodes *it's likely you'll love this.*



Nodes *was an excellent game, but releasing this is a bit of a gamble — punters may find* Arc *TOO similar to the former to be worth buying. Still,* Arc *is an excellent program in itself, and it's only fair to say that it follows* Nodes *similarly to the way that* Wally *games follow each other. The graphics are excellent with some lovely, excellently animated sprites and there is some really spectacular scenery. The music is good too, although it sounds rather similar to the backing music of* Robin of the Wood. *If you liked* Nodes *then you should definitely try out this one, it's a great arcade adventure but maybe just a little too much like its predecessor?*

And worry they did, since it transpired that the 'lith (that's trendy spaceman's terminology for Monolith) was an extremely sophisticated tactical warfare computer and was planted on the Moon by a race of galactic megalomaniacs from the planet Ariat (Ariatans if you hadn't guessed), to which the 'lith was transported when Charlie attempted to destroy it. Should the Atarians, sorry Ariatans, get their sweaty little appendages on the necessary information, it means only one thing . . . The end of the Earth as we know it! Only one man can prevent such a travesty, a man who is familiar with the ways of the 'lith and those who guard it — The Rt Hon Charlemagne Fotheringham!

So, after much persuasion and deliberation, Charlie found himself on a spacecraft to Ariat. And when he landed on the outskirts of the capital city he found his surroundings uncomfortably familiar — the planet Ariat looked remarkably like . . . The Moon! Although there wasn't a mole to be seen, rockets were occasionally launched from the craters — but why? He wasn't sure. Despite certain scenic differences Charlie felt a certain deja vu . . . This feeling was strengthened when he began to explore the darker depths of the planet, for beneath the placid exterior there were all manner of alien life forms, behaving like those previously discovered in the Moon. Although they didn't look the same, Charlie knew they would present as much of a problem as before, especially since one strange beast disorientated him on contact. He was in deep trouble (literally) and it seemed that finding the 'lith was going to be even more of a taxing task than he initially thought. And of course, once found it must be destroyed . . . But how?

During his search our aspiring hero discovered several crys tals. Their composition was as familiar as their surroundings . . . Could this be the breakthrough he was looking for? Charlie pondered upon the idea and decided it would be wise to collect them — it worked before, so why not now?

With the aid of a small spherical device of similar qualities to the moles found on the Moon's surface, and by effectively using the transporters placed throughout the multitudinous subterranean passages, Charlie managed to collect eight crystals of the same structure. Now all he had to do was locate the 'lith — its destruction was imminent . . . But then so was the Earth's if, by some quirk of fate, he should fail . . .

Presentation 82%
A few options and attractive on screen layout.

Graphics 96%
Eloquent backdrops, full of detail and atmosphere with equally attractive sprites.

Sound 83%
Some good tunes and befitting FX.

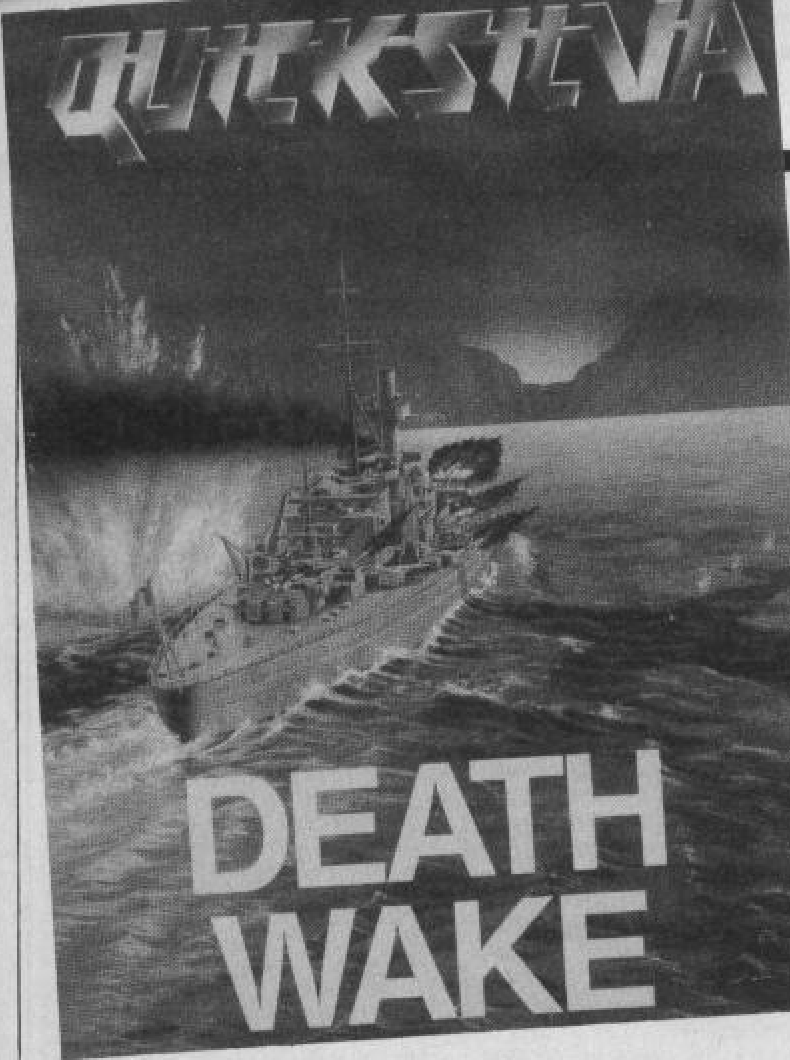
Hookability 92%
Although the game is a mite derivative it still proves compelling to both play and map.

Lastability 91%
A harder game to complete but just as absorbing.

Value For Money 90%
Maybe not so worthy if you've already bought *Nodes* . . . But then if you liked it or haven't got the original, *Arc* offers a bit more for a little less.

Overall 91%
An improved version of *Nodes* can only be an example of an excellent arcade adventure.


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ZZAP! TEST

DEATHWAKE

Quicksilva, £7.95 cass, Joystick only

D*eathwake* is a sort of *Beach Head I/II* type game which hurls you into a war situation. In the tradition of all true 'war hero' storybooks, you are completely outnumbered as you take on the entire enemy force single handed.

The story goes like this: the enemy hold vast areas of the homeland in the north and west and are one step away from completing research which will give them the atomic bomb. Needless to say, if they make The Bomb, the war will not continue for very much longer . .

Allied attempts to destroy the research plant have failed, owing to the fact that it is built into the side of a mountain, deep inland along a narrow inlet. Air attacks have proved useless and there have been no survivors from the three commando raids. There's one hope remaining — you, the Captain of the battleship **Undaunted**.

Research has shown that it is possible to enter the narrow inlet and destroy the plant by firing upwards under the protective shield of the mountain. However, this is a task of epic proportions and the odds are stacked against you as you prepare for the voyage.

The game is broken up into several different arcade sequences like *Beach Head*, with between-screen air attack phases. Here a map is shown of both the allied and enemy territory along with all the airfields, radar stations, ports and so on. What the player has to do is try to take out as many enemy emplacements as possible by allocating targets to his own airfields. Once the targets have been selected the aircraft can be scrambled and sent on their missions. The computer decides the damage caused, shows the results and then puts the player into an arcade sequence.

The first of these sequences is an attack from enemy aircraft. The Undaunted and her two escort ships must thwart wave after wave of torpedo-dropping aircraft by shooting them down. The ships and planes are viewed from above and a *Missile Command* type cursor is used to target the shells from the ships. When an aircraft gets near to the ships it drops its torpedo, which has to be avoided otherwise the ship sustains damage. The two escort ships are dispensable and are lost if one torpedo hits them. The Undaunted, on the other hand, can sustain three hits before she sinks — just as well as she's vital to your mission.

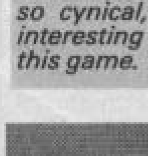
If the player manages to get past this screen then another air attack phase follows. The next arcade sequence is a 3D view from The Undaunted and puts you under fire from patrol boats. These move along the horizon, turn and sweep towards you before releasing their torpedoes. The only way to survive this screen is to sink the patrol boats before they launch their torpedoes. This is done by using your guns which can be moved up, down, left and right.

The third screen is another view from above, only this time the player has to guide The Undaunted through a minefield — a collision with a mine and the game ends.

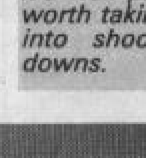
Finding the correct elevation is the key to the fourth screen, as you try to sink the three battleships blocking the entrance to the inlet. Whilst you're doing that they're busy pounding you with shells, so speed is again of the essence.

If you manage to survive that onslaught then enemy planes are again scrambled in a last gasp attempt to stop you before you reach the base. The same principles apply to that of the first arcade screen and successfully avoiding torpedoes and shooting down the planes ensures your progression to the final screen.

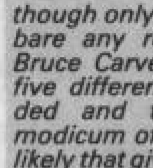
This is very similar to that of *Beach Head*. Again getting the right elevation wins the day; this time the player has to get a shell through the doors of the research plant before they close — not an easy task by any means, but then winning a war single handed never is.



Although I never thought that highly of Beach Head *when it first appeared back in 1983, it must be said it was, and indeed is, a damn sight better than* Death Wake, *which has many similarities to US Gold's aforementioned classic. I found the six arcade sequences very monotonous to play and in fact as far as I can see there are only three truly different screens. I'm sorry to appear so cynical, but dull is far too interesting a word to describe this game.*



This more up-to-date Beach Head *is great fun to play and offers quite an addictive challenge to any budding battleship captain. The graphics are fine — nothing flash but they fit the game nicely and are better than those of* Beach Head. *This is the sort of game which offers instant appeal but may pall after a while since there are only five screens. It's well priced at £7.95 and is worth taking a look at if you're into shoot em up/sink em downs.*



Deathwake *seems to be highly derivative of US Gold's first big hit,* Beach Head. *The scenario and approach to the game is very similar to the Stateside hit even though only a couple of screens bare any resemblance to the Bruce Carver's creation. In all, five different sheets are provided and though offering a modicum of challenge it seems likely that given a little bit of time and practice any gamester should be able to crack them, not very good for long term appeal then. Graphically* Deathwake *is not astounding, adequate is a word that springs to mind, and looks a little bit antiquated compared with today's digital masterpieces. If this type of war game does appeal to you then* Deathwake *should provide quite a reasonable amount of entertainment though it seems likely to prove dull for anyone else.*

Presentation 79%
Jolly high score table and well presented overall.

Graphics 68%
Tiddly, but quite nice sprites which fit the game well.

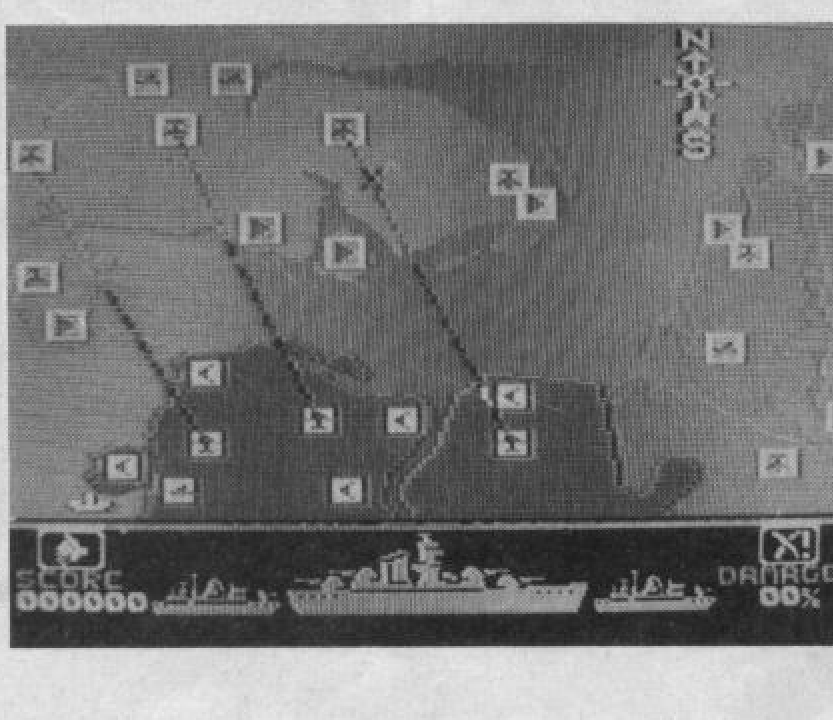
Sound 36%
Dakka dakka boooooom.

Hookability 72%
Progressing from screen to screen is challenging and proves to be enjoyable.

Lastability 63%
A reasonably difficult game, although it only has five screens.

Value For Money 66%
Cheap(ish), although the scenario is a bit passe.

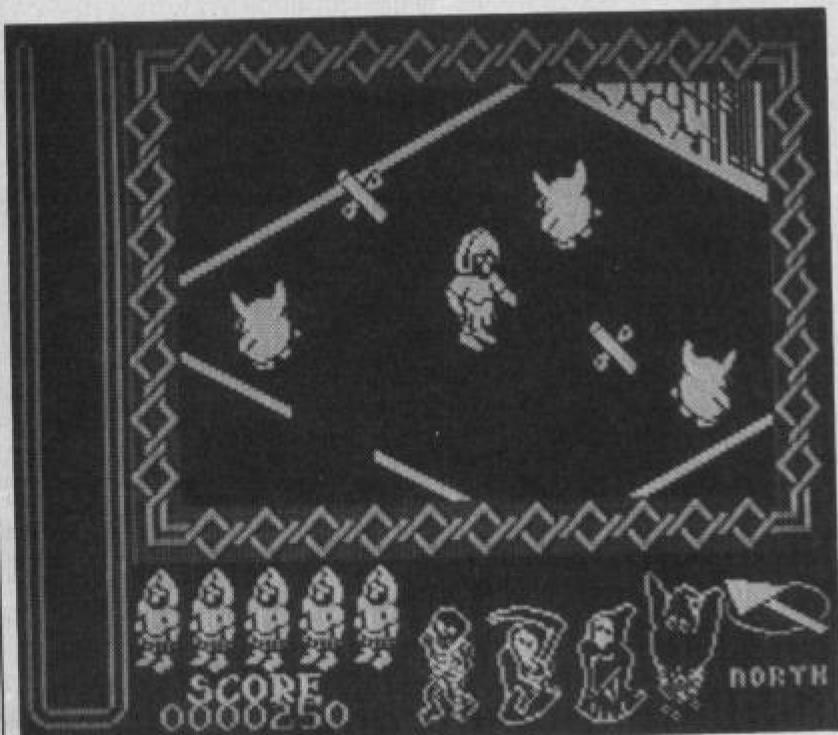
Overall 66%
Despite some disagreement on the team, considered worth trying if you're a warmonger.





NIGHTSHADE

Firebird, £9.95 cass, Joystick



Many moons ago in a hidden valley be tween the purple mountains and the seas of the Seven Islands there was a great calamity: darkness descended upon that land, evil overran all that was good and death and hunger spread. Those who re mained became twisted and stricken with evil and the village in that valley became possessed with powers so black that no body dared enter.

Years later the story became legend and only the songs and tales remained of those who had tried to enter the valley never to return . . . for those who trespass into the village become ensla ved by the immense power of the evil Overlord.

After listening to the story of the battle with the forces of evil in the Nightshade village one night, you decide to set off down the valley . . . and thus the scene is set for the latest Ultimate game, marketed by Firebird.

Nightshade is yet another ar- cade adventure which utilises the Spectrum/Amstrad 'Filma tion' programming techniques used in *Knightlore* and *Alien 8* giving a realistic 3D panoramic view of what's going on around you. The program differs from those two games in the respect that that the scenery scrolls rather than 'flicks' as you move from one location to another.

The game itself is set in a typical mediaeval village, complete with ancient looking houses, streets, barns, churches and the like. As you walk down the streets you can see the facias of the buildings in detail, with walls, gables and windows. If you like the look of a building then you can enter it through its door. When you do so the front of the building disappears, revealing what is behind — useful since it lets you see what you're doing.

Most of the buildings are connected so you can travel from one to another by moving through the series of doors and rooms inside. Many buildings have back doors accessing the street behind.

Throughout the village loads of marauding nasties rush after you and try to take one of your five men. Each man may be hit three times by a nasty before the fourth results in him being killed. With a new life your man is white and with each progressive hit he turns yellow, then green and then into a puff of smoke.

Your man looks a little like the knight from the Spectrum game *Atic Atac* . He's not defenceless either and can throw things at the nasties to protect himself. These 'antibodies' (varying from sticks to what looks like the end of a mace) can be picked up from the rooms of just about any building. Running over them automatically puts them into a tube at the side of the screen. The tube only holds a limited number of objects so it has to be replenished very regularly to increase your (very slim) chances of survival. There are extra lives that can be picked up and there are also boots which, when collected, allow you to run at high speeds for a short while.

When you throw an antibody at a nasty it doesn't always kill it straight off. Some of the bigger ones need to be shot several times. The gremlin, for example, splits into two smaller creatures which again have to be shot. The smaller creatures then turn into a bubbling mess that still gives chase until shot for the final time. Thankfully you don't have to go through this rigmarole every time you shoot something — most, like the flames, smaller sliding things and squat, toad-like creatures, die with the first shot.

The object of the game is to find and pick up the four super antibodies (bible, hammer, cross and egg timer). Once found you have to track down the four evil characters which run the show (the monk, the skeleton, the ghost and Mr Grimreaper) and throw the correct super antibody at it. If you can do that then the village will be freed from the evil which has ruled there for so long and everybody will live happily ever after . . . until the next Ultimate game, anyway!

Nightshade comes in two versions, one black and white and the other colour. The black and white version is slightly faster than the colour, otherwise there is no difference.



Although having nice graphics and all that, Nightshade *doesn't really have enough puzzles for it to deserve any better than its current rating. The thing is, all you have to do ('all' ho, ho) is collect the four different super antibodies and fire them at the meanies — fine for arcade people because all you have to do is survive; there's nothing for the adventure people to mull over. Nevertheless, it's still fun to play (the scoring potential is huge) and is difficult, especially as it's so easy to find yourself going round in circles. Try it if you like the sound of it.*



I found Nightshade *very boring to play when it appeared on the Spectrum not that many months ago. Unfortunately the same doesn't hold true for this con version since it is even duller to play than the original. This is due to the slow speed of the graphics and consequently the gameplay suffers. It wouldn't be quite so bad if the game had enough depth to maintain interest, but there isn't and as it stands I wouldn't have said* Nightshade *was worth Firebird's time . . . And money, come to think of it.*



Yet another naff game from Ultimate, at least this time it's not really their fault, Commodore Nightshade *really being a son of Firebird. Though not impressed with any detail of the game, the speed of the game impressed me the least. Even playing the supposedly faster black and white version on the B side of the tape, Sabreman's pace was still intolerably sluggish. Not that the game is easy mind you, oh no, quite the opposite in fact. There are some awful gameplay glitches that make any form of progress near impossible. Worse of all is your re-materialisation after a life is lost. Several times I got into a situation where every time Sabreman reappeared he instantly got zapped again because a nasty also chose that spot to materialise on. I'm afraid that* Nightshade *didn't live up to the standards it should have and I wouldn't reccommend it to anyone except real arcade adventure addicts.*

Presentation 75%
Attractive on-screen but hardly any options.

Graphics 78%
Effective 3D tarnished by the very slow speed.

Sound 38%
Pretty crummy music and effects.

Hookability 62%
It might be fun a-trudging around the village of *Nightshade* but the snail's pace puts you off so quickly.

Lastability 61%
Completing the game is tough but the lack of gameplay makes it dull.

Value For Money 49%
May have value for some arcade adventurers, but generally overpriced for what it offers.

Overall 54%
What worked well on the Spectrum because of its speed ends up being slow and less interesting on the 64.



KANE

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, Joystick only



Running true to Hollywood stereotypes the cowboys and indians are fighting each other. As in all games there has to be a hero and in *Kane* his name is Marshall McGraw and the difference between him and the normal run of the mill cowboy is that he's trying to make peace with his redskin brothers. Standing in his way is the indians' reluctance to trust him so to prove himself worthy, Marshall McGraw must demonstrate his skill in a duck shooting competition. If he gets through this and wins some peace tokens from the indians then the next priority is to get them to Washington so the peace treaty can be drawn up.

Trouble is that the N.A.S.T. Railway company intend to run a track through the indians' ancient burial grounds. Realising that the government would veto such a development if peace was made between the two races N.A.S.T decides it's in their best interests to stop McGraw from getting the peace tokens to Washington. In the town of Kane, N.A.S.T. place several of their men to ambush McGraw on his way to the train. The only thing is to do deadly battle with the agents — if he wins, McGraw then has to get to the train for Washington which is now speeding its way eastward. With his trusty steed it's possible for McGraw to catch up with the iron horse and hop aboard — but an easy job it isn't due to the large amount desert debris littering the sides of the railway track. McGraw has to get Dobbin to jump the various items including rocks and tumbleweed to make his way to the head of the train.



Kane *is an great little game which follows in the footsteps of some of the classic Mastertronic budget releases. The game has plenty of humour, a sprite cheekily stolen from* Impossible Mission, *plenty of playability and a fair bit of challenge — what more could you ask for for £1.99? There are only four screens, but they are all real fun to play, especially the duck shooting screen. The graphics are fine, the sound effects iffy, but it does play very well. How Mastertronic do it I just don't know, but this is well worth every penny of the measly two quid asking price.*

Kane is split into the four stages and throughout you control Marshall McGraw, a mere pawn of destiny. The first sheet is the duck shoot and the rules state that you must use a bow and arrow for this one. Supplied with a limited amount of arrows the idea is to down as many ducks as possible. An on-screen cursor is joystick controlled, fire loosing an arrow from McGraw who stands in the bottom right hand corner of the screen. The arrow whizzes to the spot the cursor was at when the button was pushed. The duckshoot is held in a idylic valley near the indian camp and the ducks fly innocently from left to right at random heights. Piercing a duck with an arrow results in an anguished quack from the sky and a thud as the animal hits the floor. The better your performance the more peace medallions come into your possession — and the less pesky ducks there are. If none are collected then the game is over.

The next screen depicts McGraw's heroic dash to *Kane* on Dobbin, his pure white dedicated mount. At the top of the screen the miles left to travel are shown and as Dobbin gallops along his merry way the background scrolls past. The longer the left or right directions are held on the joystick the faster Dobbin trots. Fire makes McGraw use his spurs and get Dobbin to leap.

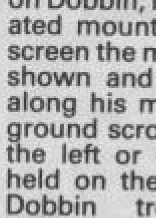
Once at *Kane* N.A.S.T.'s desperados make an attempt to finish of the good marshall. McGraw moves left and right along the bottom of screen, controlling a cursor that aims his gun. Fire draws and fires the trusty six shooter and any baddies hit unleash a synthesised scream. Once out of ammo, McGraw needs to run off screen left where his weapon is reloaded. Stand still too long and a desperado will dispatch him to that big OK Coral in the sky. After the bad people have been shown the light with a bullet through their torso, McGraw has to catch up with the 15:51 to Washington.

McGraw is on Dobbin once again, dashing for the head of the train. Unlike the first horse ride to *Kane*, Dobbin's speed needs to be carefully controlled to bound over the obstacles. Once at the front of the train you have saved the indians and N.A.S.T. are defeated.

If you wish it's possible to practise on various screens with the practice mode supplied, though it is impossible to complete *Kane* like this.



Most striking thing about Kane *is its main sprite's resemblance to the one in* Impossible Mission. *The game itself is really not that bad. Certainly worth the £1.99 asked for it. Though presenting some challenge it's very easy to reach the final screen of* Kane *and, though the last stage is quite hard, it seems likely that with some practice most people should be able to finish it. Graphically it is very pleasant but the music is absolutely awful. Though this is certainly not the best Mastertronic release to date it looks like they are still bringing out very playable games for extremely modest prices.*



Although Kane *isn't one of Mastertronic's better releases, it certainly isn't one of their worst and does offer several hours of enjoyable play. The graphics are nothing spectacular (the animation on the horse is excellent though), and the sound is poor (although I do like the sick 'squawk' the birdies make when shot). Overall, an adequate game for a cheap price and something worthy of consideration.*

Presentation 64%
Clumsy game start and icky title screen.

Graphics 78%
Unimpressive backdrops but some excellent sprite animation.

Sound 50%
Brilliant sampled sound but really dire accompanying tune.

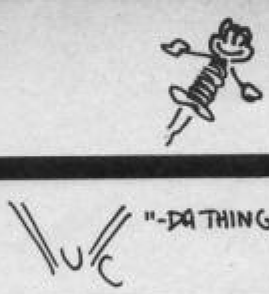
Hookability 79%
Great fun to start with . . .

Lastability 65%
. . . but appeal soon fades due to lack of challenge.

Value For Money 85%
Still well worth £1.99, but . . .

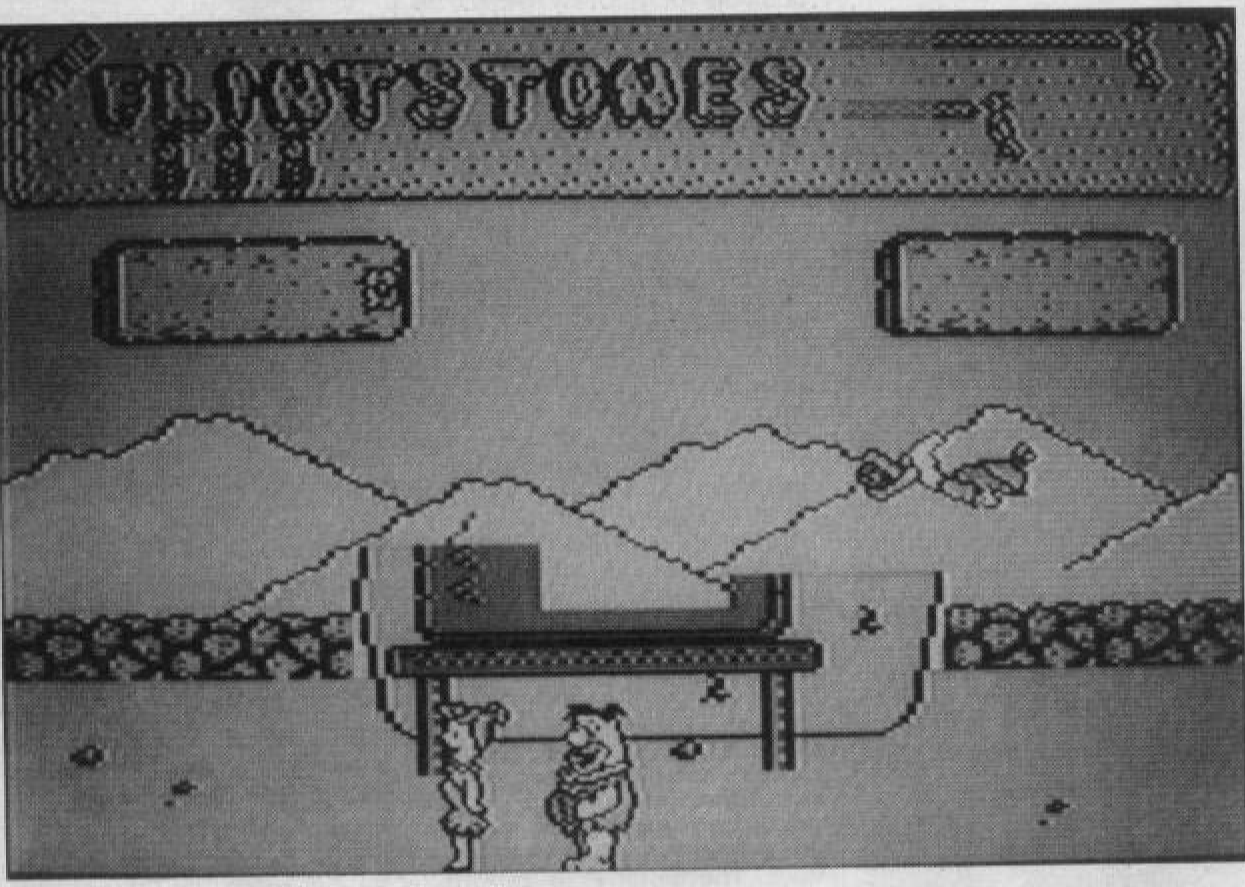
Overall 63%
. . . not the best that Mastertronic can achieve.





YABBA DABBA DOO

Quicksilva, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys





Following in the footsteps of Thunderbirds, Yabba Dabba Doo *is yet another conversion of a favourite television series of mine that has totally failed to capture the ethos of the original. All that is spot on are the excellent graphics, Fred looks just right and is very good indeed. The game itself is average and soon begins to bore. Avoiding molestations from Dino and the turtle is near impossible. The map isn't that hard and the end goal isn't particularly difficult to achieve, just awkward. I didn't like* Yabba Dabba Doo *at all and it's a shame to see something with such potential to go to waste.*



Way back at the dawn of time there is a prehistoric conurbation with Burger Bars, Health Clubs and a Drive-in Movie — a stoneage metropolis known as Bedrock, whose inhabitants are as timeless as the Earth itself (and their television series come to think of it) — the Flintstones! Those legendary cartoon caricatures have been effectively reincarnated and brought to life on your screens in digital form courtesy of Task Set.

The game takes place before Mr Flintstone ever met Mrs Flintstone and Bedrock was nowt but a twinkle in the collective minds eye of the natives. You play the part of Fred Flintstone and it is your task to win the heart of that gorgeous gal Wilma. Obviously it takes more than the good looks and charisma of a sweaty caveman to impress a female Neaderthal type. Yes, to ensure that Wilma will dotingly follow Fred, he must build her a house made of finest stone. And this is where the problems start . . .

Fred needs room to build his residence, so his first task is to clear the unwanted flat stones from the vicinity of the site and dump them in the nearby tip — easier said than done, since pterodactyls and turtles prove a constant hindrance. The former attempt to drop rocks on poor Fred's head and the latter rob him of his energy, as does Dino,



The graphics are the most stunning thing about this game — the sprites look exactly like their cartoon counterparts! Unfortunately the game isn't so hot, and basically boils down to being a prehistoric collect em up. There are also some niggly bits in the gameplay element, it's just about impossible to walk past a nasty simply because the screen isn't 'deep' enough, the only way to avoid them is by wandering off the screen then back onto it — which soon becomes a real chore. It's a shame really, I'm sure something more exciting could have been made of the Flintstones, as this stands it's just plain Joe average.

the Neanderthal equivalent of Man's best friend, who gets a little over-excited when he sees Fred and inadvertently molests him in a similar manner to the turtles with similar effect.

The state of Fred's health is shown at the top right of the screen and is depicted by a bar. As his energy depletes, a woodpecker hammers away at the bar until it finally reaches the end and a life is lost. Should this occur four times Fred's cause is lost along with his lives and the game is over.

The house can only be built with the finest smooth, round rocks and these are scattered about 40 locations, which flip from screen to screen when moving from one to the next. As Fred can only carry one rock at a time he must return to the site and desposit them before he continues. Once the house is complete it needs a roof. Unfortunately Fred is a little on the short side and therefore needs some form of ladder to reach the roof. Luckily there is a Dino-Hire in the neighbourhood where one can conveniently hire dinosaurs with stepped backs, suitable for climbing on and attaching roofing. But hiring a dinosaur costs money and this can be obtained by working at the quarry for a short time, not that any work needs to be done as Fred merely needs to pick up the dollar sign lying provocatively upon the floor. Should he completely finish building his humble abode he can go in search of Wilma and attempt to persuade her to 'shack up' with him. Ah, love is blind!



I'm not what could be called an ardent fan of the Flintstones but I enjoy both the television and computer programs, despite the simplicity of the latter. All of the characters in the game are superbly drawn and animated and capture their cartoon counterparts perfectly. I found the sound disappointing though and the tune soon resulted in the volume being turned right down as it irritated so much. Yabba Dabba Doo *is by no means a great game, but I found it enjoyable enough to play and it is reasonably cheap enough to tempt those interested in the subject matter.*

Presentation 77%
Few options but good instructions and attractively presented on screen.

Graphics 86%
High quality cartoon sprites and adequate backdrops.

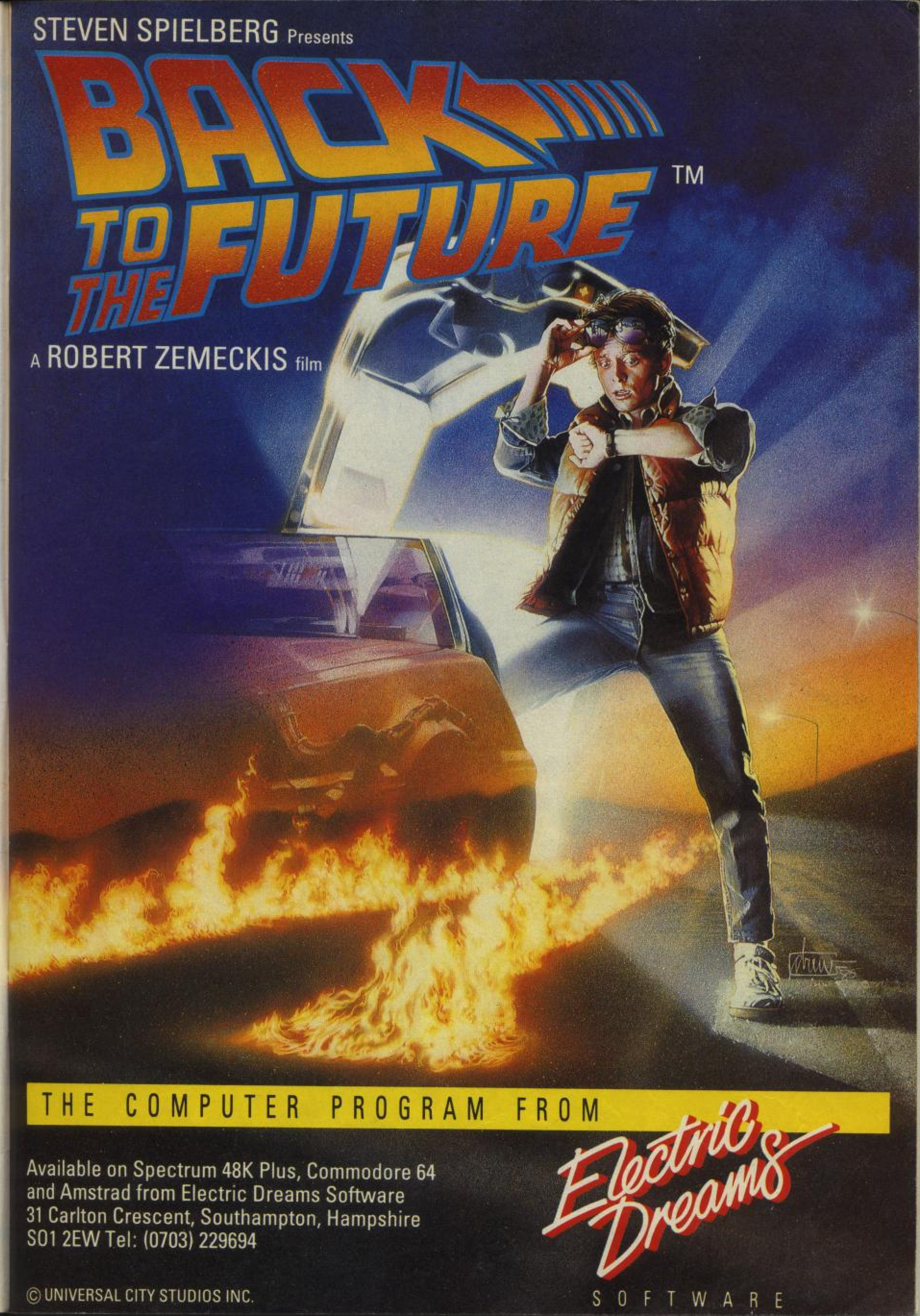
Sound 65%
Reasonable rendition of the Flintstones theme tune and some OK FX.

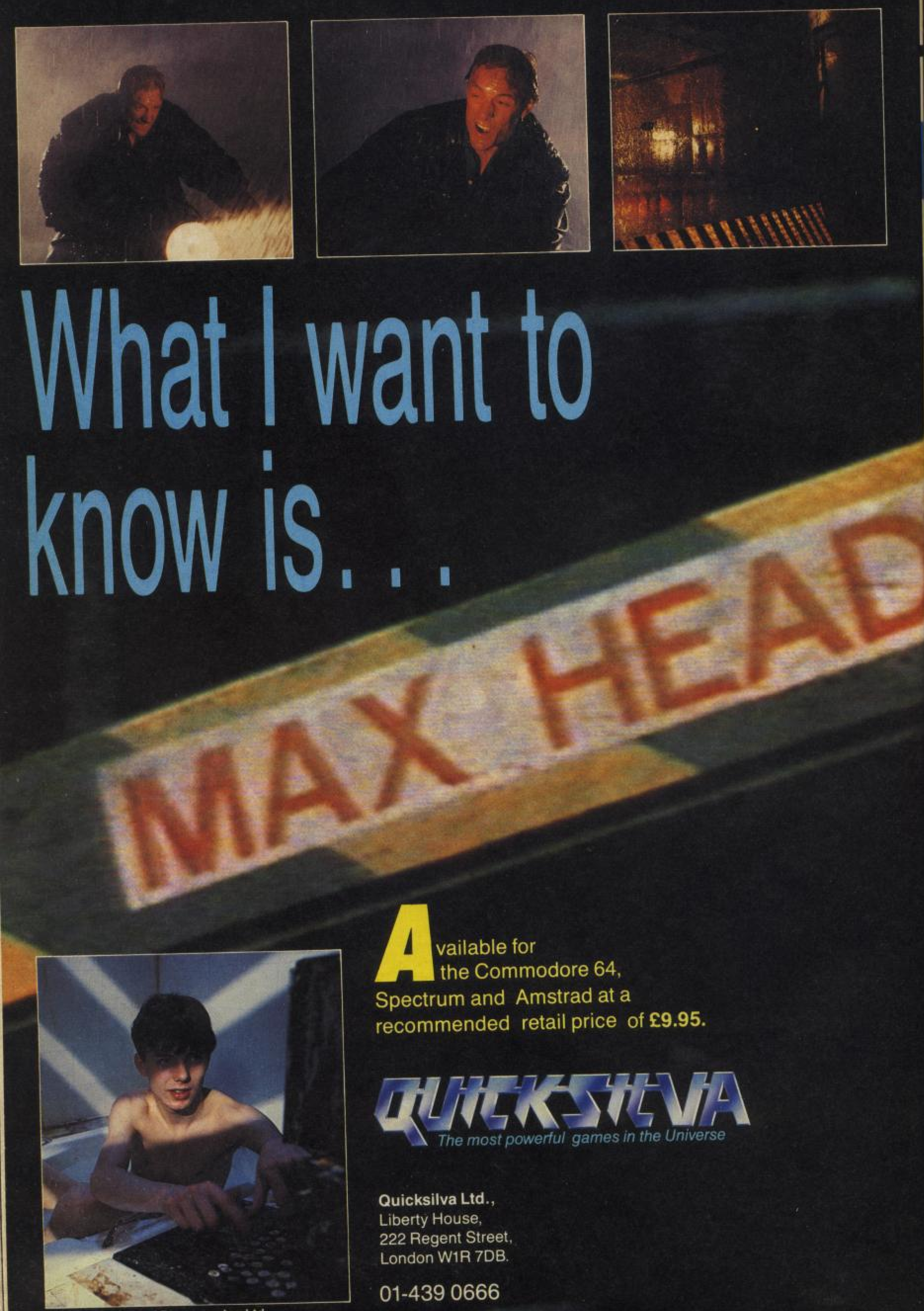
Hookability 69%
Easy to get into and initial frustration appeal.

Lastability 52%
Too hard for the younger gamesplayer and not varied enough to maintain interest.

Value For Money 60%
Sufficiently cheap to entice youngsters and junkies of the TV show.

Overall 60%
Will probably appeal to fans of the television series but as games go it certainly isn't anything special.

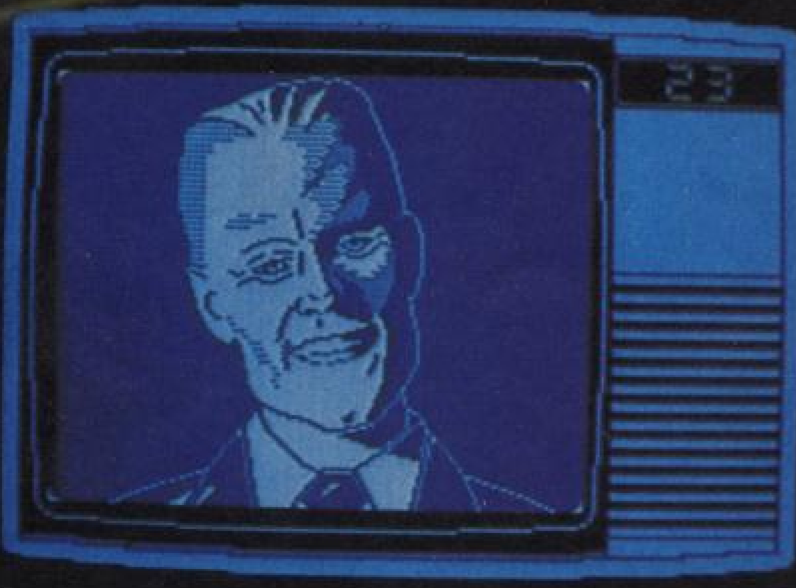

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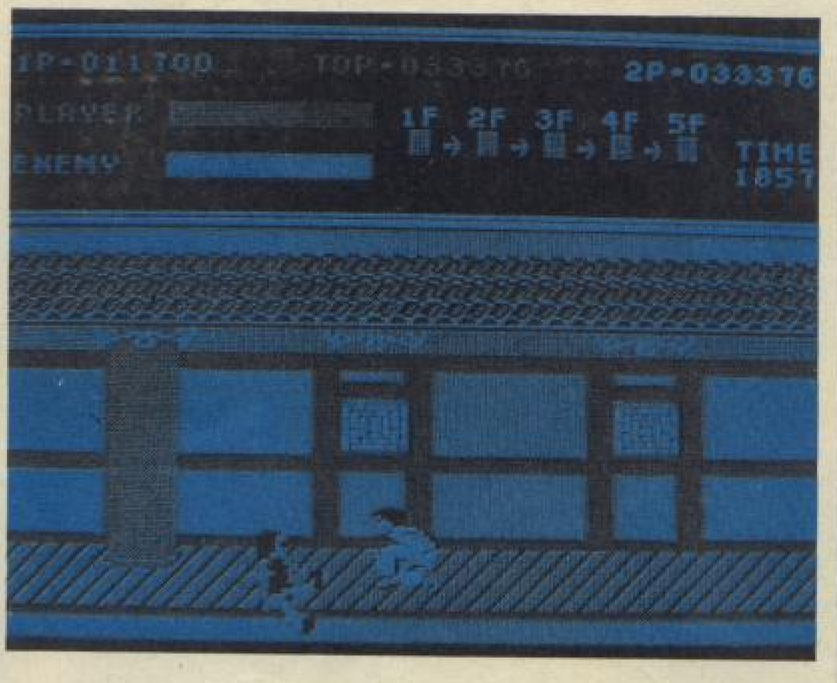


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KUNG FU MASTER

US Gold/Datasoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, Joystick with keys



When Thomas was a little boy he was different from the rest of his peer group, he didn't want to be an engine driver when he grew up, Thomas wanted to be a *Kung Fu Master*. After years of dedicated practice Thomas finally achieved his goal and is a bit of a dab hand with the ancient martial art. So when the fair Princess Priscilla is captured by the evil and loathesome Wizard it is Thomas who must play the hero. The royal beauty has been whisked away to the Wizard's secret temple far away in the wilderness and very well guarded she is too. The temple is five floors high and her highness is on the top floor, each previous level being populated with increasingly nasty do-badders. Not only do the Wizard's henchmen hinder Thomas but there are also normally inanimate objects that have been filled with badness and behave mischievously when Thomas nears them. On later levels vases fall from the roof and contain snakes that give lots of grief and hassle once let loose.

Thomas has the habit of staying central in the screen while his world scrolls around him. Using the joystick without any fingers jammed over the fire-button moves Thomas around, quite logically left moves him left while right makes him go right. Up prompts Thomas to athletically fly into the air and down causes him to duck down. If a grubby digit is over the fire button then moving the stick about offers one of two sets of functions. The first set is a number of different kicks ranging from high to low. Press the space and a different set of fighting moves flick into control. Now when fire is touched a set of punches are summoned up. Pressing space once more brings back the drop kicks.

The baddies stroll down the corridor towards you and need a kick or a punch to total them. If left unassaulted they assault you instead and a quick wiggle on the joystick is needed to get rid of them. All the while you're being hassled, energy status ebbs away. If it reaches zero then one of the three original lives is lost. Once Thomas gets to the end of the corridor he must do battle with the weapon wielding guardian, a nasty sort of chap who wants to bar the way. Conquer him and the next level is accessable.

A whole host of baddies are after your skin. A majority of the assailants are normal run of the mill joe kung fu's but also worth looking out for are midgets, mystic balls and exploding pots. Men baring knives also give Thomas gype and these take two blows to vanquish.



Though initially very unimpressed with this game after a bit of play it soon became clear that despite the tacky graphics, Kung Fu Master *plays quite well. The challenge and thrill of a good digitised punch up are all there. The smack of flesh against flesh is most convincing and quite satisfying. Graphically it's very splodgy indeed with expando sprites being put to use for a lot of the nasties. The obstacles faced are strange as well. Though I can see things getting a bit too repetitive after a while,* Kung Fu Master *is great fun to play.*



On the few occasions I've played the arcade version of Kung Fu Master *the joystick has always been a bit iffy and I haven't enjoyed the experience that much. Fortunately, this Datasoft conversion is very close to the original and now I can play the game within the confines of the office walls with a working joystick, I find it great fun. Despite dodgy graphics and sound,* Kung Fu Master *is a great game due to its high playability and is a martial arts variant that shouldn't be missed by fans of the genre.*



Kung Fu Master *is a very faithful conversion of its coin-op Daddy and contains every aspect of the original even down to the dum diddly dum diddly backing jingle. The game itself is great fun and getting past the evil guardians of the doors to each floor certainly takes quite some doing. Fortunately you have the option of being able to tackle any of the floors, a luxury which would be greeted with much appreciation in the arcades. The graphics are just about as accurate as they could be and the sound is almost identical (apart from the huuuwack Thomas utters when he hits a horrible hacking matey on the arcade machine). Martial arts freaks should be well pleased with this and shouldn't miss it at any cost.*



Presentation 53%
Extremely awkward menu needs three key presses just to start a game.

Graphics 71%
Colourful but very chunky with it, the animation is not exactly astounding either.

Sound 66%
Inept but pleasant tune with some nice sound FX for a bash in the face.

Hookability 81%
Fun to play and has some instant 'mindless' appeal.

Lastability 82%
The several levels offer more than fair challenge.

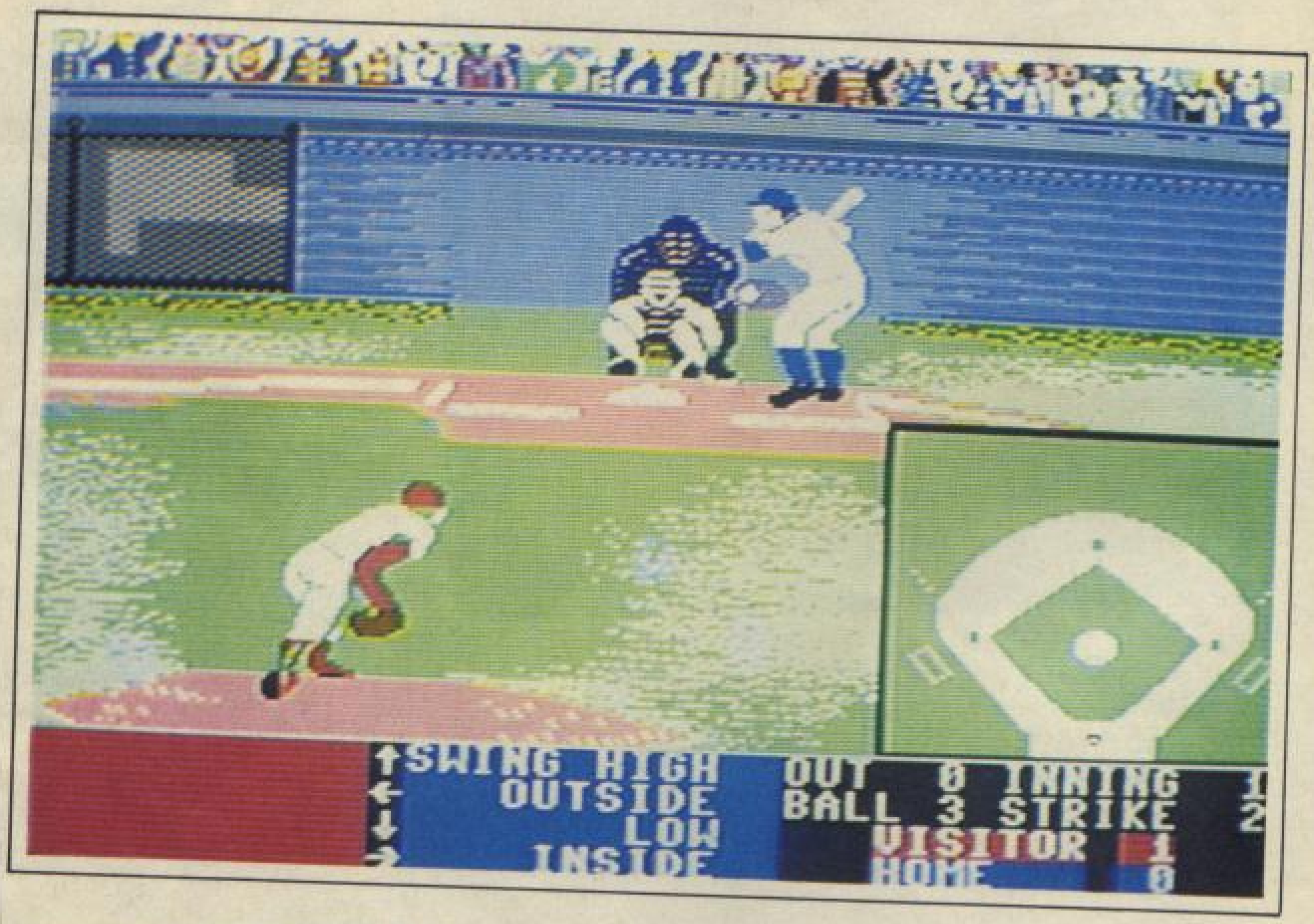
Value For Money 76%
A bit above the odds for such an average program but violence fans may feel the need to shell out.

Overall 79%
Fighting freaks may flip but norms may not be over enamoured.



HARDBALL

US Gold/Accolade, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, Joystick only



Hardball is the third attempt to bring the American national sport of baseball to 64 owners. The game has a different approach to both its predecessors and involves all aspects of baseball, from playing the game to making crucial managerial decisions.

The game commences with an options screen allowing you to choose between one or two players. In one player mode the 64 either takes over the home or away team, depending on which you choose. Once those formalities have been completed then a list of both teams is shown. Each team has 10 players which are picked from the team's pool of 25 and during this period you can change and reassemble your team.

The players each have their own personalities, weaknesses and strengths which are all shown. The upshot of this amazing depth of player differentiation is that, with practice, you can assemble a team to suit your own playing style and end up with one which becomes a powerful force with you behind them.

Once you've sorted out the teams then the game begins. The home team is always put into bat in the first innings, whilst the away team fields. Batting and fielding is all controlled through the joystick, and although being tricky (playing professional baseball for the first time always is) is mastered with a little practice.

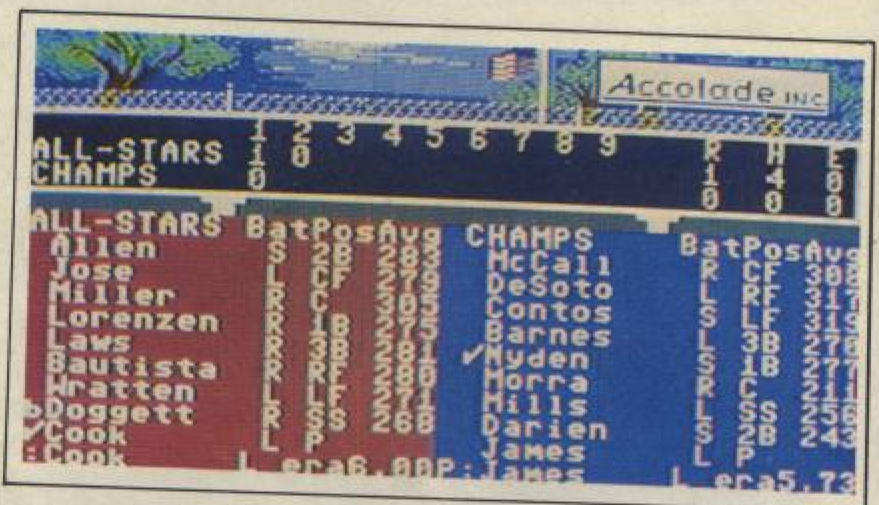
PITCHING AND FIELDING

A special screen is used for batting and pitching showing a 3D view from behind the pitcher which includes the striker (batsman), pitcher and catcher. Your pitcher always has four special moves, one of which has to be chosen before you can pitch. These are usually *fastball*, *screwball*, *changeup* and *curveball*, although these may differ depending on the pitcher fielded. To choose a throw, move the joystick in the relevant position (shown in the pitcher information box at the bottom of the screen) and press fire. The nice feature of this is the fact that it's possible to choose your throw without the other player knowing, just like real life! When the type of throw has been chosen then you can move the joystick up, down, left or right in conjunction with the fire button to pitch high, low, inside or outside. There is massive potential to pitching and once sussed it is possible to pitch all manner of balls, both legal and illegal.

If the striker misses the ball then the catcher automatically catches the ball and a 'strike' is added to your total. Three strikes in a row and the striker is struck out. If the ball is illegal and the striker doesn't make a swing for it then it is declared a 'ball'. If the pitcher throws four balls before the striker connects or is struck out then the opposing team are awarded a 'walk' where each player on the playing field is allowed to move to the next base.

If the striker does connect with a pitched ball then the screen changes to a panoramic view of either the left or right of the playing field (depending on where the ball is hit). The fielder nearest the ball (whether in the air or on the ground) flashes and the player is given control over him. The player can then intercept the ball and throw it to a base by pressing the fire button in conjunction with up (2nd base), down (home base), left (3rd base) or right (1st base) on the joystick.

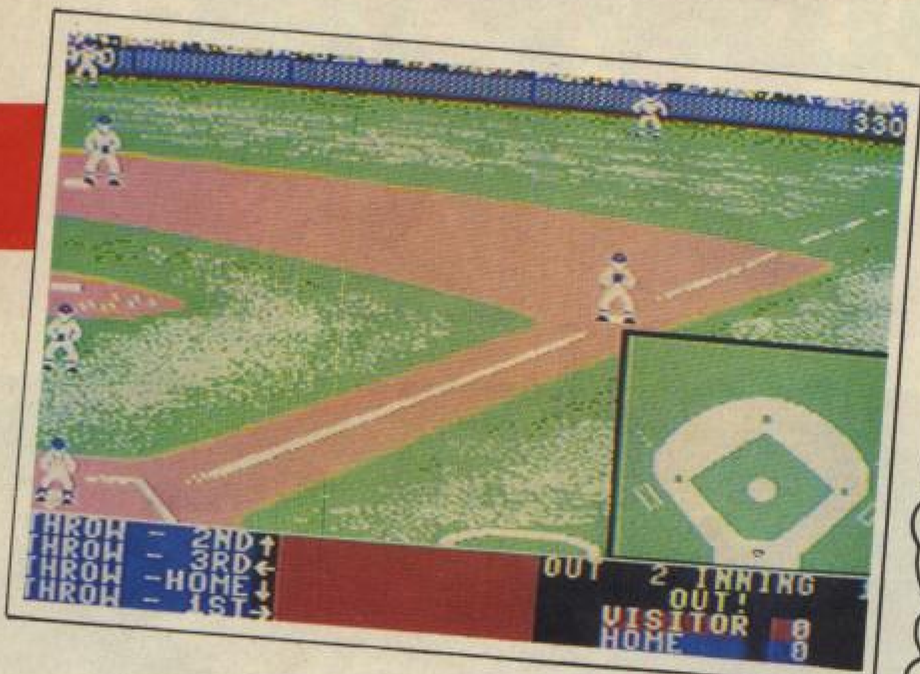
Once the ball is safely back in the hands of the pitcher then the screen switches back to the original pitcher view.

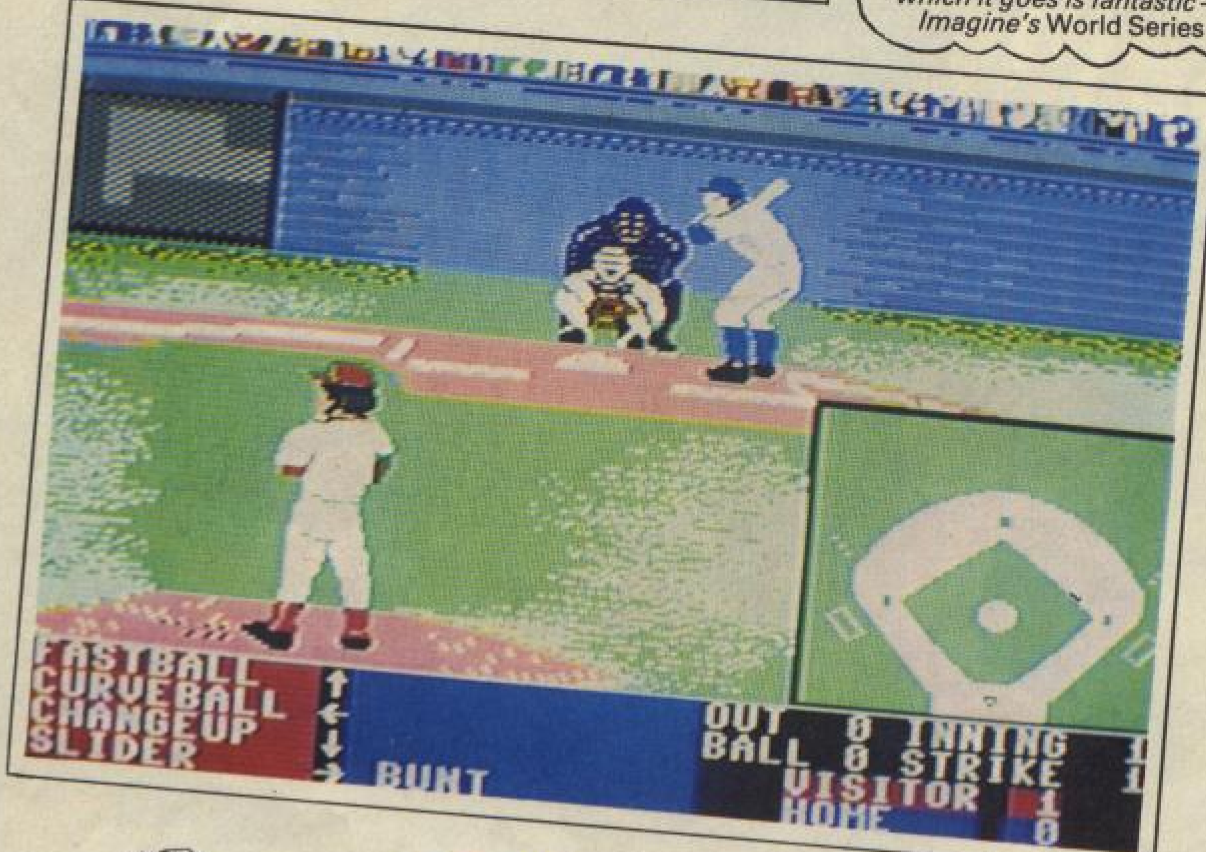




Baseball is not a sport I find particularly interesting to watch, or play for that matter, but there is something about Hardball that makes it compelling to do both. This is probably due to the highly original approach and the exceptional graphics — both definition and animation are first class, especially the latter attribute. Sound is the weakest aspect of the game, but what there is, is used to good effect to make up for their weakness. Not only is Hardball the most impressive baseball simulation yet seen, it is one of the best sport simulations to date, despite its possible minority appeal.









Hardball is an absolutely incredible sports simulation!!! The animation on the strikers and pitchers is the best yet, from a distance it looks like it could be a televised game! Hardball brings every aspect of baseball to the 64 and the depth into which it goes is fantastic — Imagine's World Series was a game, this is a real-life simulation.

Accolade have struck the balance of difficulty perfectly; although very hard at first, once you know what you're doing it is possible to hit or pitch the ball wherever you see fit. Another excellent feature is where all aspects of baseball have been included in the game, from hitting the ball round the field to the tricky job of managing and fielding the right sort of team — the potential of the game is just immense. Hardball is surely the best real life sports simulation to date and sets new standards in gameplay, depth and animation.

If a player presses the space bar before the ball is pitched the screen switches to the team list. Here the pitcher is able to change the position of fielders or substitute a relief pitcher. Likewise the striker can shuffle the order of batting to give himself more of a chance.

Hardball strictly follows the rules of World Series and is error trapped for any illegal moves. The game takes place over nine innings, and if the score is even after that then the game continues until a team wins an innings, no matter how long it takes!

BATTING

Striking (or batting) successfully is the hardest aspect of *Hardball*: a keen eye and swift reflexes are needed otherwise a player will find himself struck out time and time again. A striker has only a split second to decide whether the ball is low, high, swinging out or in and whether to actually go for the ball or not (remember, an illegal ball becomes legal if you attempt to hit it). Once you've decided that, you can make the player swing high, low etc by moving the joystick to the corresponding position and pressing the fire button. It sounds difficult, but within a few games you'll find yourself growing accustomed to the split second decisions and whopping even the most tricky pitches home.

Once the ball has been hit the striker automatically runs for the first base. When he has done that then the player can decide whether to attempt a sneak at the second base (a risky move).



Hardball is another great sports/sim from US Gold which arrived here just at the right time — when I'd finished watching my first look at US Baseball on Channel 4. The graphics are amazing — consisting of very large, smooth, beautifully animated graphics. The sound contains some nice spot FX especially the skidding of the men when diving to 'steal' bases, there's also a nice tune at the beginning of each innings but it is stopped when you start playing.

The moves you can use are very extensive and contain a few sly ones from the US league like 'bunting' and 'stealing' bases. My favourite bit was the pitching (mainly because I couldn't score a run), I found I could do no end of 'fast balls' and 'curvers' often putting my opponent into a very awkward position. Hardball is one of my favourite sports/sims to date and fills in the long weeks between the American Footy.

Presentation 95%
Well thought out options, and excellently contrived joystick control.

Graphics 96%
Stunning graphics, especially the animation on the giant size players.

Sound 68%
Roar of crowd and a few jolly jingles.

Hookability 91%
Ease of use allows the player to instantly become a baseball star.

Lastability 92%
A tough nut computer opponent and two player option means that *Hardball* will be played long after the baseball season is over.

Value For Money 93%
The second best thing to the World Series.

Overall 93%
A truly realistic sports simulation which sets new standards.


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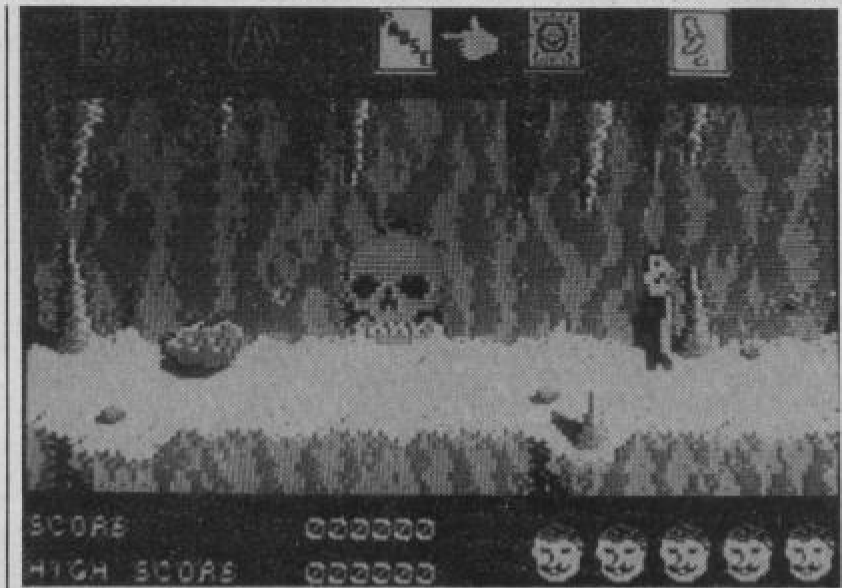


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DRAGONSKULLE

Ultimate, £9.95 cass, joystick with keys





Despite man's incessant curiosity and the relatively small size of the planet Earth there are still a few undiscovered lands tucked away in far off places. Such as the isle of *Dragonskulle*, fraught with danger and evil . . . The evil of the Skull of Souls. The Ultimate hero, Sir Arthur Pendragon, must find this skull and destroy it, thus ridding the world of the most terrifying supernatural horror after the Devil itself.

Dragonskulle is the fourth and final arcade adventure in the Arthur Pendragon series and follows its successful predecessors closely with its approach. The action is viewed through a smooth scrolling window, as in previous Pendragon adventures, and flips from one location to the next when moving 'in' and 'out' of the screen. Above this window there are five icons which are selected by pressing a key and activated with the joystick fire button.

The first is the shovel, which once found allows Arthur to dig holes. Then there is the magical energy cloak which makes Arthur invulnerable to a majority of the nasties encountered in the game, but only for a limited period. Useful, but again it must first be found and can only be used once before requiring energy replenishment. The third icon pauses the game when selected while the fourth allows Arthur to fire magical orbs which usually dispose of a nasty if thrown accurately. Finally, there is the jump icon which speaks for itself. If Arthur wishes to use an object not currently in his possession and activates the respective icon, a head appears in its place and shakes from side to side to indicate that the action can't be performed.

Throughout the game there are the ubiquitous Ultimatesque problems to be solved, such as how to get past flashing skulls.



The latest in the long chain of Arthur Pendragon adventures is yet another disappointment. Although Ultimate have tried a different approach to the 3D graphics it doesn't really add anything to the game. The sound is once more a let down, why Ultimate can't get a competent sound programmer I don't know. This game has the usual grindy old jingle with an arpeggio in the background. Well, one thing that's good — this is the last of the Pendragon adventures . . . Perhaps Ultimate can concentrate on producing something a little different and more interesting.



Dragonskulle *is, with a few minor exceptions, everything I expected it to be, ie very similar to Ultimate's previous arcade adventures and as far as I am concerned hackneyed. Ultimate haven't progressed at all since* Staff of Karnath *and surely can't expect their games to sell purely on the strength of their name. I am wholly bored with this style of arcade adventure and thankfully,* Dragonskulle *is the last adventure in the Arthur Pendragon series, so perhaps we might see something more inspiring in the near future. I do hope so. Still, if you're not tired of the Ultimate approach yet, you may well derive some pleasure from* Dragonskulle. *I didn't, but then I have got several 'O' levels in how to be a miseryguts*



Thank God this the last in the series of Sir Arthur Pendragon adventures. The guy just isn't the hero type. When Harrison Ford wants to leap a cavernous ravine he doesn't bunnyhop it does he? Bunny hopping is for wimps as is dying which I found myself doing for the oddest reasons whilst strolling around Dragonskulle. *The 3D effect just isn't — lots of silly little mistakes take away any sort of reality the game had. Ultimate's pioneering work in getting as many unmatching colours on screen at once has been used to good effect. Looks nice with the chunkier-than-pedigree-chum sprites having a good wibble about the screen. I think you may have guessed by now — I don't like* Dragonskulle *and one more release like this for the 64 and I won't like Ultimate.*

"NEED A BIG GARY?"



Presentation 65%
Adequate instructions but few options.

Graphics 76%
Good backdrops but porky, ill-defined sprites and poor 3D effect.

Sound 35%
Dull, unimaginative music and FX which sound far too much like previous offerings.

Hookability 54%
Nothing overly interesting to initially inspire.

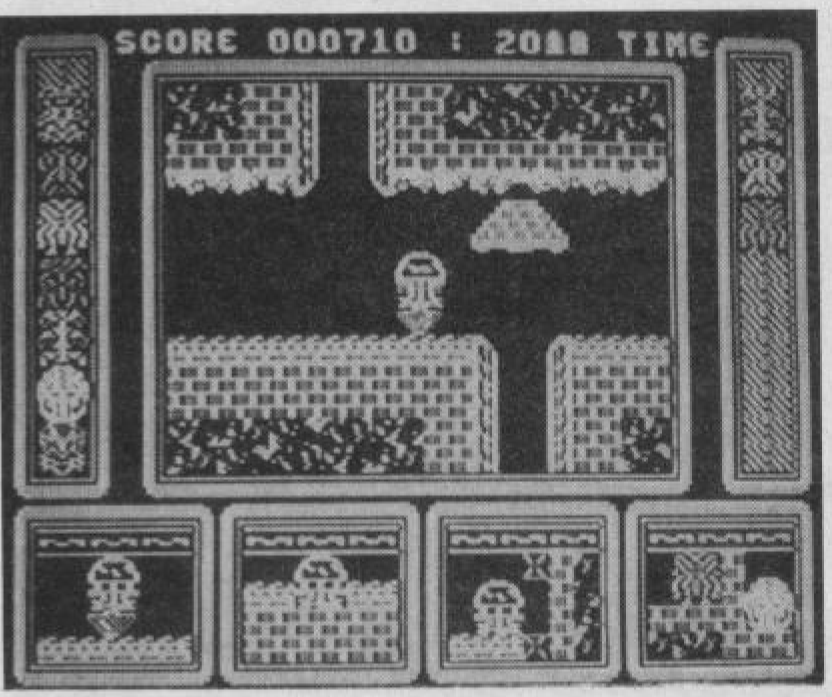
Lastability 45%
And little to maintain interest.

Value For Money 45%
Expensive considering the poor quality of the product.

Overall 49%
It's about time Ultimate played the game and came up with a good one.

ONE MAN AND HIS DROID

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, Joystick only



You've been sent off to the planet Anromadus to round up members of a species of alien animal named ramboids and teleport them to market. Despite the name, ramboids are not Sylvester Stallone look alikes, but are the Anromadian equivalent of male sheep — hence the name ramboids. Technologically things have moved on quite a bit since the days when a shepherd's only friend was his dog. The modern shepherd has traded in Shep and got himself a droid, a multi functioning device specially designed for the job. Capable of four different modes of operation the droid is used to guide the ramboids into the teleport chamber.

When you start the game you are given the option of inputting a password in order to resume a game you were playing earlier, otherwise you start at the beginning. There are passwords for each of the twenty different ramboid-filled caverns, and as you progress through each cavern, the computer releases the corresponding password to you.

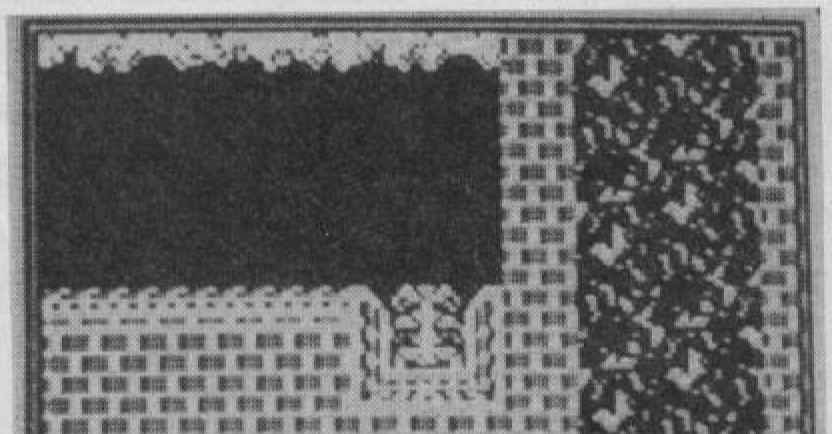
At the start of a game the screen is split up into seven different windows. Largest and centrally placed is the main window which looks into a cavern, displaying a view of your droid placed centrally amongst the scenery. Your first task is to guide the droid to the start position. When you arrive at the start the computer takes over and places the droid in the first cavern.

Once into the first cavern, the other six windows activate. A narrow, vertical window to the left of the main screen randomly shuffles eight different ramboids within itself to set the collection sequence, which is the order in which you have to get the ramboids into the teleport. A window on the right of the main screen charts your progress, indicating the ramboids you've penned so far with those herded into the correct place in the sequence flashing.

The four remaining windows, arranged horizontally below the main viewing window, display the four modes in which the droid can be operated. The mode the droid is currently in is highlighted by a white bar above the relevant icon. The most useful mode of transport is jet mode: using the jet it's possible to zoom about in the normal, left, right, up and down directions. The droid stays central while the bricks and earth of the cavern whizz by in the main window display. Burrow is the second mode: the droid can move left and right along ledges and burrows into the floor while fire is held down, popping up again and leaving the floor intact when it's released.

The third utility mode allows the droid to alter the cavern by digging tunnels. If the droid walks into a wall while it is in this mode, a large portion of the barrier is eaten away and the floor and ceiling of the newly formed alcove is supported with purple girders. To switch between the different modes, press fire; holding fire down reveals a map displaying the positions of all the ramboids left to be collected.

Ramboids are dim. They move very predictably, and always reverse their direction of movement if their way is blocked. Once you know this, and watch the set patterns of movement herding them is relatively simple — but they are delicate creatures which only live for about twenty minutes. You are working against the clock all the time. Should you fail to get at least four ramboids in the teleport in the right order within the time, it's back to the first screen.





First to hit you upon loading up this cutie is the epic Hubbard sound track. I know it's rather easy to get blase about this man's work but the music on One Man and his Droid *is certainly the longest and probably the best he's written yet. The game itself is fairly simple but does provide more than a fair bit of challenge. It is hard to say the least. There are quite a few clever little presentation points, the password to later levels is quite good. Though not a game of particular note I still feel that* One Man and his Droid *is still worth the money asked for it.*



Another Mastertronic £1.99 special quietly slips onto the streets. Don't be misled by the rather basic Spectrumesque graphics, One Man and his Droid *is great fun to play. The backing music is yet another Rob Hubbard special, and although sounding similar to* Monty on the Run *features brilliant voices as it pounds away. If you're loafing around with a spare couple of pound coins a-jingling in your pocket then trundle into your local shop and buy it — it's great!*



One Man and his Droid *is one of Mastertronic's better releases and despite simple graphics and play elements it is great fun. The brilliant Rob Hubbard soundtrack pounding away in the background helps somewhat and it is probably his best piece to date, although his music is starting to get tiresome and slightly passe. An excellent game though and well worth the asking price.*

Presentation 80%
Nice use if icons, passwords for later levels but no restart.

Graphics 60%
Bit chunky and the character scrolling looks jerky.

Sound 94%
Although a bit similar to his other pieces, Hubbard's music brings life to the game.

Hookability 72%
Quite easy to get into and immediately enjoyable.

Lastability 79%
Lots of challenge and plenty of screens to keep you going.

Value For Money 87%
Not their best, but still well worthy of a higher price.

Overall 81%
Generally very good, but probably has highest appeal for those who enjoy making maps.

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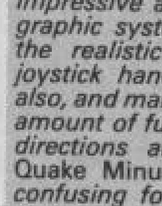
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QUAKE MINUS ONE

Monolith, £9.95 cass, Joystick only



Quake Minus One *is yet another casualty of the industry's fondness for overly hyping product. I probably wouldn't have thought so badly if my expectations weren't so high. It just isn't the megagame it's cracked up to be. Quake does have it's bright points, mostly in the sound and graphics departments, but the gameplay is very confusing indeed. Printing some intelligible information on the pieces of paper marked 'instructions' would have helped a lot. After many a frustrating game things start to get a little clearer but a great deal of effort is needed to reach even this level. The most impressive aspect is the clever graphic system used to create the realistic perspective. The joystick handling is ingenious also, and manages to get a large amount of functions from eight directions and a fire button.* Quake Minus One *is just too confusing for me to form any real opinion, although after some play I came away with a general feeling of dislike. Some people may like it and I'm sure quite a few more will buy it.*



We first saw a copy of Quake Minus One way back in issue 3, and duly let you readers know of its existence by means of the news page. Since then we have had numerous unfinished copies which were previewed (one of which a certain magazine REVIEWED) and now it has finally arrived in its entirety, months behind schedule. The game itself is highly confusing and is the sort which takes, literally, weeks of practice before any sort of proficiency is gained. The instructions are very poor indeed and explain only the functions of the various icons and installations, nothing at all about the game objective. This confusion is further heightened when playing — there is no indication of what is really going on, and referring to the instructions only draws another blank. It's a shame really as the graphics are very good, with excellent 3D as you zoom about the complex and the sound effects are very atmospheric, but they are let down terribly by the gameplay. If you like buying games which require masses of attention then this is the one to buy. If you like your games a little clearer and action less frustrating then steer well clear.

In the late 1980s a massive automatic power plant, **Titan** was built, deep under the Atlantic Ocean where the Earth's crust is the thinnest. The huge complex drew red hot magma from deep within the Earth's core, converted it to energy and supplied nearly all of the World's industrial nations with the power to work their giant factories.

This continued quite happily until disaster struck. The RLF (Robot Liberation Front) invaded the complex aiming to give equal rights to robots. Although they were only a small group of crackpots they were in a position to bargain — they had planted a device which would interfere with the Titan complex sufficiently to trigger an earthquake — an earthquake of such epic proportions that it would result in the biggest cataclysm ever endured by mankind! The resulting earthquake from the destruction of the Titan complex would cause immense tidal waves that would totally destroy all cities along the European and Atlantic seaboards. The loss of life, damage to property and the ruination of the world's economy would be incalculable.

The game begins a day before the RLF's device explodes and it's up to you to take control of the complex . . .

Titan is in fact controlled by five separate computers: **Zeus**, **Poseidon**, **Vulcan**, **Ares** and **Hermes**. Luckily, government scientists have managed to re-establish contact with Hermes and with just under ten hours to go, it's from Hermes that you start your World-saving quest. You commence the game under severe pressure and it's made even worse by the fact that your base, Hermes, can be recaptured by the other Titans (who have been turned hostile and have been alerted to your presence). If this happens then the game terminates rather swiftly (and so will the lives of millions and millions of ZZAP! readers), so stay cool and keep a level head!

Fortunately it's not all bad news — the scientists have managed to fiddle with the complex's real-time clock and this can be used to slow the countdown of the bomb and give you about an extra hour of game time. Needless to say that this interrupt has to be used sparingly and only in dire emergencies to give you just that extra little bit of time to complete a task or mission.

When you start the game you are instantly confronted by the rather complex and highly confusing control panel of your submarine craft. Many of the control gauges like energy, interrupt clock and fuel gauges are easy to read and speak for themselves, but it takes quite a while to learn all the symbols and be able to execute functions swiftly and correctly.

Littered over the seascape are many installations, both friendly and renegade, which may actually be used or destroyed. For a start, there are the five main complex computers which have mobile vehicles under their control. These have to be destroyed since they are very hostile and fire at you whenever you approach them. The roads which run around Titan each have junctions and control of these is vital if you are to get anywhere in the game. When moving about the complex you are made aware of which roads and junctions are currently under your control by their colours: yellow means that the road is under your control, orange means the enemy have them.

Along the roads are computer mobiles, the enemy ones obviously need to be destroyed, and rocks that have to be blasted out of the way. Along the sides are many weird constructions, each with a separate function. Control towers stand at the end of each junction and have to be captured if you are to take the road. Factories can be used to repair your submarine vehicle, stopping by them and accessing the correct icons fixes your vehicle after a certain amount of time (the more damage you have sustained the longer the wait).

Other vital (and friendly) installations include the fuel tanks and energisers which can be used in the same way as the factories. Quake supressors are highly important and under no conditions should be destroyed — the destruction of one will advance the Quake Countdown by an hour. Cooling domes also shouldn't be shot — the destruction of one of these results in a small explosion which destroys everything in the immediate vicinity. Beware of Rigs, these are quite dangerous if under enemy control since they have a fair bit of fire power.

Conducting columns neutralise the effect of ionic blasters (either yours or the enemy's, depending on who controls it). Bunkers are other unfriendly constructions if renegade as they are heavily armed and extremely difficult to destroy. The final building is the Magnetron which saps weapon power and eventually damages your craft.

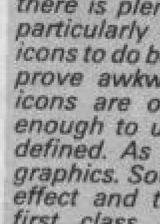
As you move around the landscape everything moves in extremely fast 3D, rather like a swift, continually flowing *Lords of Midnight* landscape. The technique used was developed by Mike Singleton himself and has been labelled **Actionscaping**. It is effectively a sort of follow-on of the Landscaping technique first utilised in *Midnight*.

Moving from one junction to another is fairly slow, but once the movement is mastered you can zip around the complex at quite considerable speed. There are plenty of things to blast as you zoom about and you need to decide which roads and junctions should be captured first. Obviously the further you get into the game, the more difficult it is to defend all your 'fronts'.

THE VEHICLE FUNCTIONS

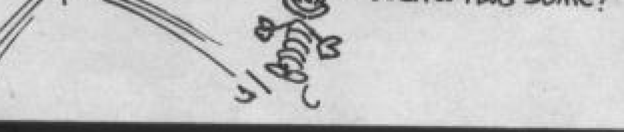
The submarine vehicle is terribly confusing to a novice, but with a bit of practice it is possible to understand and use the functions.

The System keys show four icons which represent the four systems — engines, pumps, communications and emergency repair. If any of these has a moving icon in its window then the system is functioning well. If the icon stops then there

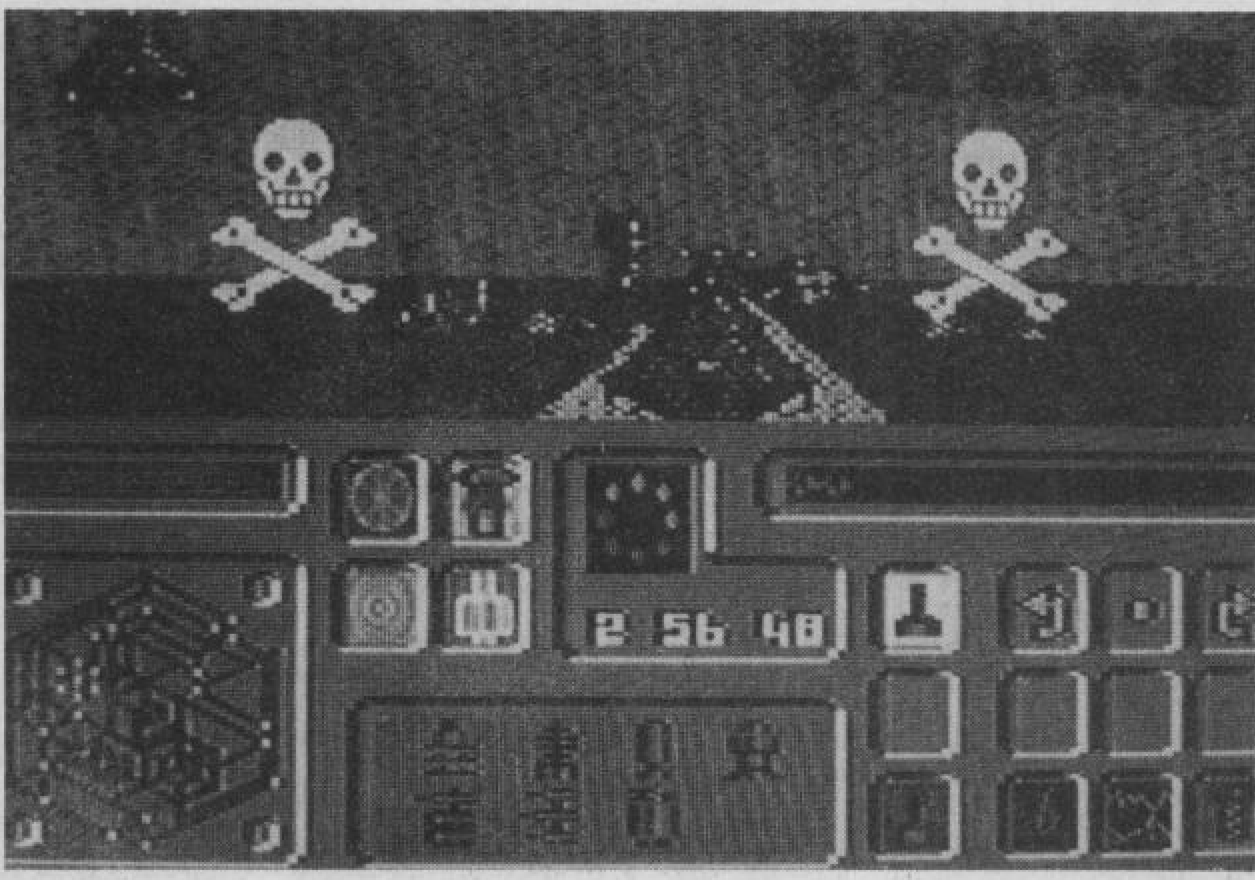


Humph! I'm really disappointed with Quake Minus One. It took ages to get into, due to incredibly poor documentation — something not normally associated with Beyond games — and when I finally did get to grips with the game it wasn't as interesting as I thought it would be. Though there is plenty of action it isn't particularly exciting and using icons to do battle in real time can prove awkward. However, the icons are on the whole easy enough to use and adequately defined. As are the rest of the graphics. Sound is used to good effect and the presentation is first class, with the notable exception of the instructions which merely describe the features of the game in a clear, concise manner and not how to play — it would have saved some time and lots of grief if playing instructions were provided. Still, Quake isn't a bad game — just one that needs a lot of time and perseverance to gain rewarding results. Unfortunately, I am no longer prepared to do so, but who knows — maybe you are?

"THERE MUST BE A SCREEN SHOT SOMEWHERE..."







is damage and if the window goes black then that system has been totally destroyed.

On the extreme left of the console is a map showing your current position, the bases which are hostile and those which are under your control. A weapons indicator shows the weapons which can be used and the main display shows mobile functions and weapon selection.

Moving around the complex involves quite a few icons and it takes some practice before a player is able to move around the whole of the Titan complex swiftly. When you reach a junction icons have to be used — move the cursor over one of the eight directions you want to face. Once you are happy that you are facing in the correct direction then you can put the cursor over the 'move forward' icon and this will send you speeding down the road. There is also a 'reverse' icon so you can zoom along backwards if you so desire. It is also possible to move by accessing the map screen. When you do so the main view screen changes to a plan view of the complex. You can then progress by simply aiming the joystick in the direction you want to go. In this mode it is also possible to stop halfway down a road allowing you to see what installations are at that point. Using this you can also view enemy movement without actually engaging in combat and see areas which are congested with renegade vehicles.

When you're at a junction there are several modes at your disposal: Movement (as aforementioned), Thrust mode (you can thrust forwards or backwards) or Weapons mode.

Weapons mode allows you to select any offensive or defensive weapon which is currently at your disposal. These include mines (which can be dropped on the road), torpedoes (to clear the road), a laser, missile pods (against enemy installations), a fireball gun (wide area devastation), an ionic laser (neutralises an enemy installation's circuit), shock shields (defence) and plasma shields (another defence mode). The vehicle can access either one attack weapon or two defence weapons simultaneously.

CRITICAL MASS

Durell, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

Once again, your mission to is save life, the universe and everything. Alien forces have captured an anti-matter conversion plant which supplies power to colonists in a distant planetary system. The aliens are threatening to turn the anti-matter plant onto 'self-destruct' and wipe out the entire planetary system, and a couple of neighbouring stars, in the process — unless they receive unconditional surrender. But since this would prove a fate worse than death, it's up to you to travel across the surface of the asteroid on which the power plant is sited, infiltrate the alien enemy's positions and disable the anti-matter converter before it achieves *Critical Mass*.

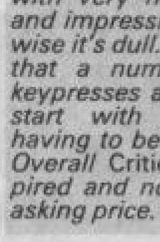
You are put in control of a rocket-propelled hover craft with high speed strike attack capabilities, according to the armaments manufacturer's sales blurb. The craft doesn't make contact with the ground, thus avoiding seismic detection, and is equipped with a powerful laser device. It is protected against collisions or alien attacks by a force field, but every collision drains energy until the field eventually implodes and destroys the ship. The energy status is displayed to the left of the screen and is replenished if you can avoid bumping into things or firing for a while.

For the benefit of less skillful pilots, a further protection device detects when the craft is about to implode and ejects you before the event. Your character can then use the emergency jet pack to travel to a dome-shaped energy pod where a new ship can be found. On the journey, the shipless pilot is unprotected and must avoid contact with rocks and other life forms which drain energy, such as deadly 'sandworms' which pop out of the ground and wriggle ominously. An indicator, in the form of a large arrow, is provided and shows which direction to travel in.

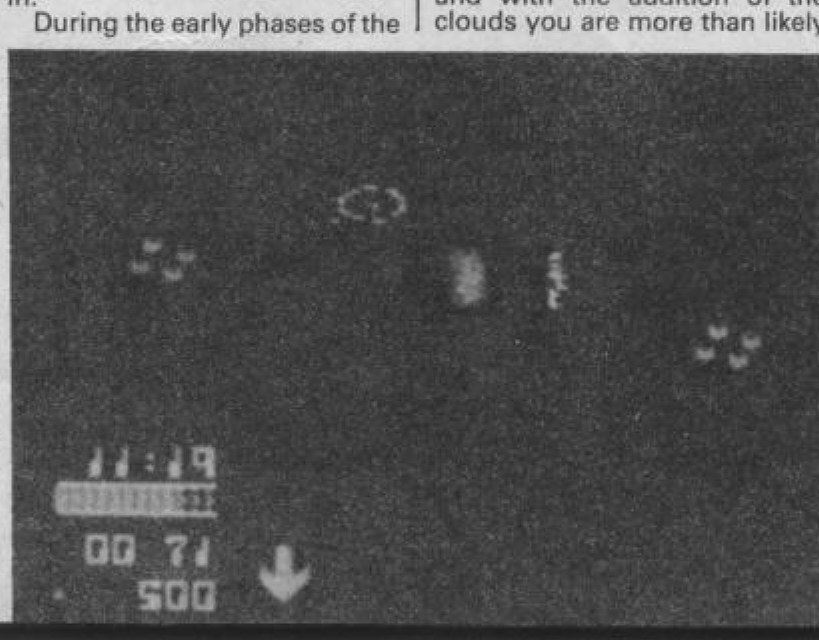
During the early phases of the game you only encounter alien long distance raiders and unfused mines, but as you progress through the zones the opposition becomes increasingly hostile with fused and guided mines to avoid or dispose of as you see fit. Once you have travelled through all of the zones you will find yourself near the power plant. This is protected by a score of nasties such as amorphous clouds of molecular disorientation. To enter the power plant you have to disable the force field gates by shooting the front of the turret that is between them. This is not easy and with the addition of the clouds you are more than likely



Though not overly keen on this slick release from Durell, it didn't take long for me to find my level and discover the great mindless appeal Critical Mass *holds. Having a jolly jaunt about a smooth scrolling alien landscape is a bit of a laugh though not really worth paying for. Graphically things are quite neat with very nice sprites indeed and impressive scenery. Gamewise it's dull. I don't like the way that a numerous amount of keypresses are required just to start with different options having to be input every game. Overall* Critical Mass *is uninspired and not really worth the asking price.*



On the whole this is quite a jolly little shoot em up, the only problem is that it has dull spots. On the first level, for example, there is nothing to do apart from dodge the rocks and the very occasional hostile sphere. Perhaps if there had been more things to do it would have been great fun, but as it stands the competent graphics and nice touches are let down by the poor game content.



Presentation 85%
Excellent on-screen presentation, but poor instructions.

Graphics 88%
Fast, effective 3D and well drawn icons.

Sound 92%
Titan March tune isn't particularly inspiring but the sound effects are superb.

Hookability 53%
Very difficult to get into due to confusing game aspects which aren't explained sufficiently by the unhelpful instructions.

Lastability 70%
If you're willing to persevere then you may glean a great deal of enjoyment, but the less patient will probably find the game too confusing and subsequently boring.

Value For Money 63%
A decent set of instructions wouldn't have affected the price that much and made the game a lot easier to get into.

Overall 67%
Not the outstanding release expected, but still a good game that is unfortunately let down by its poor documentation.

ENIGMA FORCE

Beyond Software, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, Joystick or keys

Okay, so you got General Zoff last time around and completed the Shadow fire Mission, but the General's a cool sort of cat, and that was only life number something — there's still a few left in the old tiger yet. What's more, he managed to declare war on the Empire before his capture and the galaxy is now in deep deep trouble. *Enigma Force*, Denton Design's follow-up to *Shadowfire* takes up the story as the Enigmateam, Zark, Sevrina, Maull and Syylk are transporting General Zoff in the Enigmacraft back to face the Emperor. (At this point the observant will notice that a team member is missing — Manto. The instructions merely, if not enigmati cally, replace him with 'yourself').

As the craft crosses the Imperial border, Zoff concentrates his 'awesome' psionic powers on the Enigmacraft's guidance system, causing it to plunge through the atmosphere of the nearby planet Xylon and impact . . .

The planet turns out to be a team-member of Syylk's homeworld, and before completely failing, the Enigmacraft's battle computer informs you that the ship has crashed through the surface of the planet and ended up in an underground complex beneath the capital city. Of Zoff there is no sign — he has escaped. Syylk's people, the insectoids, are locked in battle with reptiloid storm troopers loyal to Zoff. This situation is fraught with several conflicting problems. For one, Zoff is heading for the location of the only ship capable of getting off planet, and you need that ship; you also need to recapture Zoff. Another little nightmare is the fact that destructor tugs commanded by Zoff's intergalactic troopers have been spotted heading in the planet's direction — on arrival they will destroy the world, and you. The object of *Enigma Force* is to locate the ship, apprehend Zoff and escape. To do this, making friends with the insectoid leader of Syylk's people is likely to be very important.

Enigma Force departs from the system used in *Shadowfire* quite significantly. The use of icons is still there, but the top third of the screen actually depicts the animated actions performed by the characters rather than the map that *Shadowfire* used. Below the playing area, a narrow strip contains the icons for the four characters. Moving the cursor onto a character icon and pressing fire



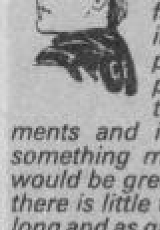
After Shadowfire *I expected its follow-up to contain really brilliant graphics — unfortunately it doesn't. The sprites are really horrible and blocky and the backgrounds pretty poor. The icon system is still a pretty nifty idea and works quite well, although it might have been a little better if Beyond tried something new. I suppose* Shadowfire *fans might just be pleased with this as it is essentially more of the same.*



to end up spinning off into the distance.

Inside the plant there is an energy beam which draws you in and must be destroyed by shooting the centre of the pyramid-shaped energy concentrator in the middle of the device. Failure leads to vapourisation of you and your craft.

The game is played against the clock, which ticks off the time remaining before *Critical Mass* is achieved and points are collected by doing away with alien defences on the way to saving the universe.



Critical Mass *could have been a good game, but unfortunately it isn't. In fact it's quite boring. Attractive graphics don't compensate for monotonous play elements and if only there was something more to do then it would be great. But as it stands there is little to hold interest for long and as games go it is barely average. Hopefully some highly superior form of follow up will be released later in the year to make up for this disappointment.*

Presentation 92%
Pleasant attract screens and comprehensive instructions, but unecessary irritation caused by delay before play.

Graphics 87%
Smooth moving (though not particularly well animated) and defined characters.

Sound 28%
Awful tune and grotty FX.

Hookability 59%
Though easy enough to get into the game fails to seduce due to its weak content.

Lastability 58%
The eight zones are tough to complete, but will you want to?

Value For Money 57%
Insufficient game for the price.

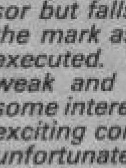
Overall 59%
All very nice to look at but very little game to play.

highlights and selects that character for action. Each character icon area has a strength bar and a blank space for 'stacked' commands (more in a mo) and objects carried to appear.

The bottom half of the screen is taken up with a scrolling area containing all the command icons arranged in groups. The main command icons include pickup (object), drop, activate (object), load weapon, hound to the death and defend and hold. Other groups show character in play and characters in a location, movement and direction icons, objects in a location and objects carried by the activated character.



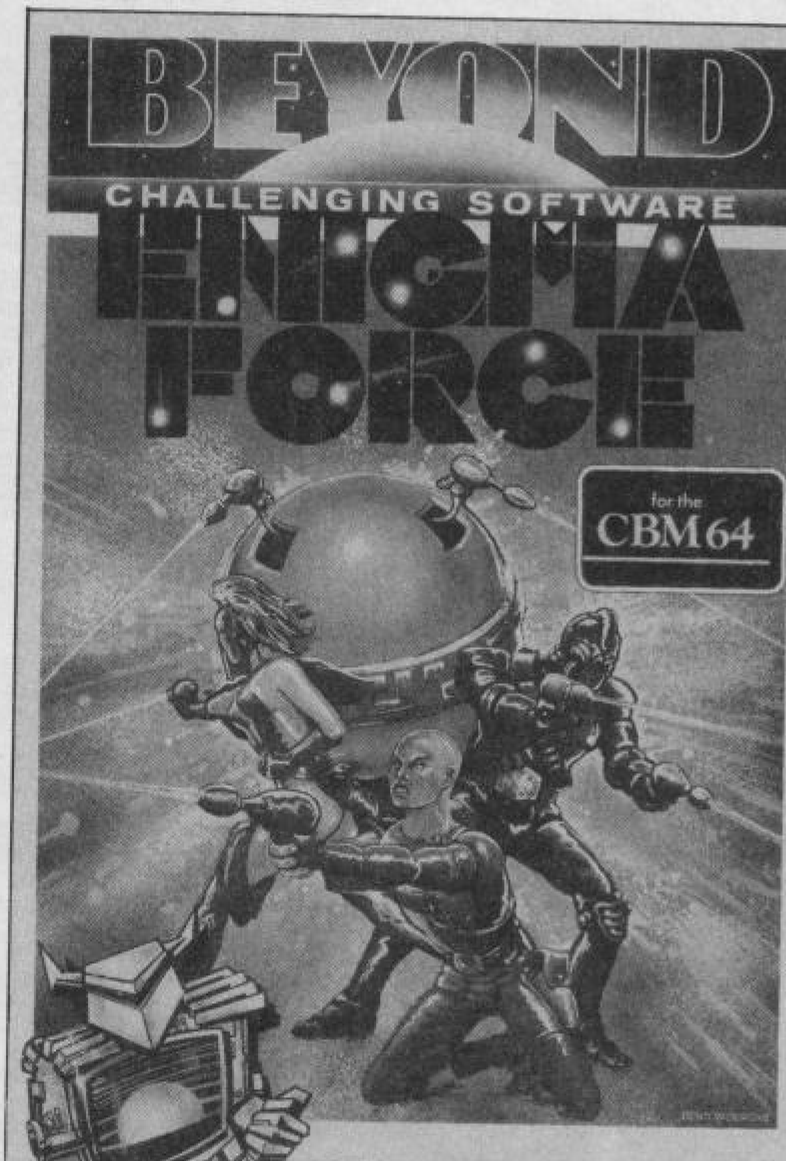
When Shadowfire first made an appearance in April last year it impressed me greatly. Unfortunately the same can't be said of Enigma Force *as it's a very disappointing sequel indeed. It could, and in fact should, have been vastly superior to its predecessor but falls drastically short of the mark as it has been poorly executed. The game itself is weak and although there are some interesting and potentially exciting conceptions, they have unfortunately gone to waste. One such example is the use of icons with an animated action screen which would have been great, except the animated action is both crude and dull respectively. Still,* Enigma Force *did prove fun to play, but not for long.*

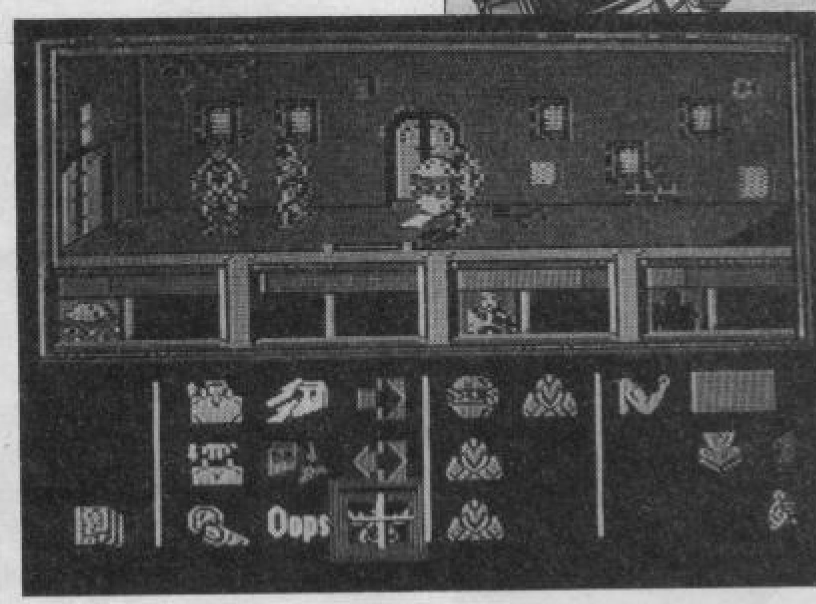


Anyone who enjoyed Shadowfire is almost certain to enjoy its follow up. I don't think the game is actually much harder to complete, however. The addition of the animated playing area makes it instantly more fun to look at, but I think the icons are slightly more confusing to use than in the former game and the instructions aren't that helpful. The booklet contains numerous pictorial examples of the icons, but the idea of showing their pixel formation blown up huge just defeats the purpose of the exercise, making them extremely hard to 'read'. I think the game elements in Enigma Force *are more varied than in* Shadowfire, *so it makes for a more interesting play. On the other hand the inclusion of 'live' action means that the graphics tend to be a bit cramped to fit everything in — a compromise. The music isn't bad however. But despite all the changes and improvements over the first game, I still don't think there is any significant advance, and while* Enigma Force *remains a very good game, it fails to provide any real extra thrills after the first few minutes play.*

To players of *Shadowfire*, the 'OOPS' and 'Mindprobe' icons will be new. in *Enigma Force* it's possible to 'stack' up to eight commands for a character to carry out — a little bit like 'type ahead' on modern adventures. These stacked commands appear in the blank box by the character icon. The 'OOPS' icon allows you to delete commands in the stack should you need to. Direct joystick control of a character can be gained by using the Mindprobe icon. Under Mindprobe, the otherwise wilful characters can be directionally directed from the joystick in the normal manner, fire causing them to use whatever weapon they are carrying.

The playing area shows the rooms and corridors of the Xylon underground complex in an isometric perspective. Doors to the right and bottom of the screen are indicated, while those in the 'back' and at the left are shown fully, opening and closing as the characters go through. Some are locked and require keycards to be found. Any characters or objects in a location are shown (unless objects are carried) in the playing area, and all the characters are animated. As in *Shadowfire*, the action continues regardless of the player, the main difference being that you can see it all happening in front of you







Presentation 78%
The instructions are poor, containing little more than glorified feature descriptions, but the game itself is more than adequately presented on screen.

Graphics 61%
Awful sprite definition and animation, but the backgrounds and a majority of the icons are well drawn.

Sound 72%
Very good tune playing throughout the game but little else.

Hookability 68%
Takes time to get into due to insufficient instructions but even so the game is not exactly awe inspiring.

Lastability 60%
Repetitive play elements affect lasting interest, although perseverence will prove rewarding to some.

Value For Money 60%
Overpriced for what it offers, though not vastly so.

Overall 65%
A disappointing sequel but may still prove popular with fans of *Shadowfire* who are looking for something to pass the time.

LIDDON'S LINK-UP

It was 02:00 am and my hand began to shake as I mopped my brow clean of salty sweat. The kitchen slowly started to spin and I felt the walls close in. I craved teapot and kettle. I HAD TO HAVE THEM!

So I made a brew and after a cup's worth of supping I decided to have a jaunt on Compunet. Well there's nothing else to do at that time of the morning. No sooner had I logged on than came the digital knock on my VDU screen from the MAIL sign appearing. To tell the truth, due to a large amount of work to be done recently there's been very little chance indeed to log onto the net. As a result our MBX is a little bit clogged up. These are the least of our problems, logging on is getting increasingly more difficult. Our modem has a personality of its own, shame that it's Hitler's.

After delving through several screens of mail quite a few Christmas cards cropped up. Thank you everyone who sent us such an UPLD and we apologise for not having the chance to reciprocate your yuletide banter. Slapped wrists all round. Prettiest of all the cards we received was from Wulf Grimbly (honest, that's his real name), a jolly picture of a snarling wolf with a Santa hat on.



Recently we saw the proper installation of the near mythical Partyline. It costs ten pence to buy the software to link, though if the program is detected as present you aren't charged, and a pound for every hour you spend chatting. The first couple of minutes on line aren't charged for, just in case you happen to be the only person present. Though much fun was had with this new media, I didn't really feel that it was as much fun as a good night on the old chatline. The response and conversation seemed to slip to an all time low, with users able to say something without thinking. On chatline, due to the computer moderated slowness of the system, every one tended to think a lot more about what they uploaded. Partyline tends to be the net equivalent of CB, with everyone asking 'How old are you?' and 'Where do you come from?'. It all gets a bit silly. Admittedly the ability to take an alias is great fun, though at the moment it's a bit of a novelty and users tend to change IDs with their every breath! The trouble is that with the advent of Partyline, Chatline has died a death. Though the diehard late nighters still use the system, during the day there's no one on. It's not that everyone's bogged off to Partyline either, since more often than not it's just as empty. Still, as time goes on, no doubt the system will be used to its full extent and an improvement might well be seen.

Once again we have asked art critique Brigitte Van Reuben back to pass her most qualified (?) eye over the best (??) offerings from the World's Worst Art section. Run by Alex Winton (AW89), the gallery has attracted much attention in the past. Our own Mr Penn even uploaded one of his efforts once, but the less said about that the better! So, here's Brigitte . . . !

Oh, by the way — apologies to CAS who drew the Judge Dredd picture printed last month. We neglected to mention his real name, which is in fact David Edwardson. Over to Brigitte . . .

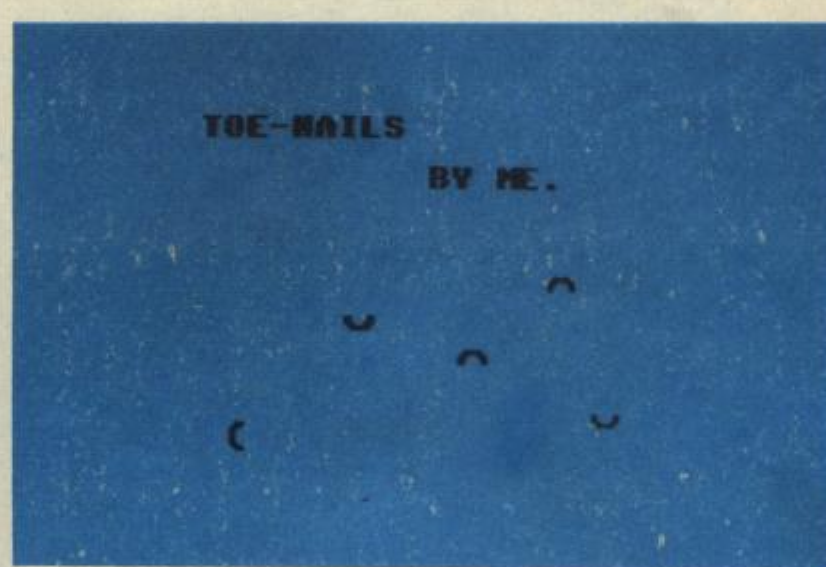
ZEN AND THE ART OF PAINT BRUSH MAINTENANCE

A learned (and mercifully short) discourse by **Brigitte Van Reuben Dip.AD** on minimalist art.

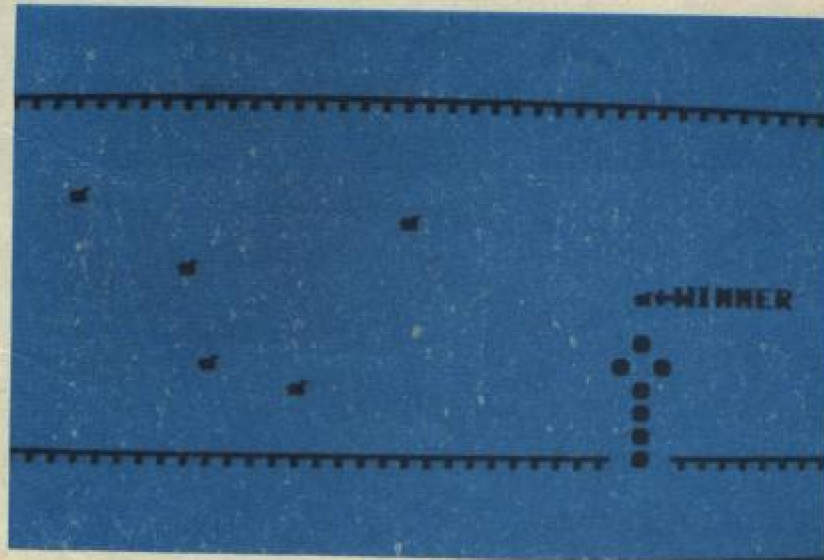
It has been a long held and cherished belief that painters are clever, and that the art of painting is to fill blank spaces with coloured clevernesses. But have painters and sculptors always been so blessed? Van Gogh cut off an ear while peeling Dutch potatoes — an event much dressed up subsequently by romantic art commentators; Gauguin caught an anti-social disease and fled in disgrace to the idyllic South Sea Isles to spread it further there; David Hockney painted plastic palm trees in California, an act equivalent to taking coals to Newcastle — I ask you, does this suggest cleverness?

Now, thanks to the the beneficial effects of Television on impressionable young people, we have been taught that we are all artists, that we all have something worthwhile to say; and thanks to Compunet's Art Gallery, lots of us are able to show off our cleverness and say it.

The first collection this month owes a lot to minimalist painters of the nihilistically swinging sixties. Painters of this school tended to love their paint brushes so much that to dip them in pigment and turpentine was considered a sacrilege. As a result they put very little on the canvass in an attempt to preserve the little sable hairs so painstakingly inserted into the ferule by those clever little women at Windsor & Newton in Harrow Wealdstone. These pictures are sharply divi- ▶



TOE NAILS
It is often the commonplace that shocks the most. An important function of art is to startle, and the everyday event that we unconsciously hide away, when presented so starkly as in this work by D Allen, can awake us to the beauty of the ordinary. After all, toe nails also have their place in life, here pared away to their essentialness.



DAY AT THE RACES
Reducing complex elements of life to the barest bones is often a vital method of understanding how life works. Doctors do it with x-rays, young farmers do it with wellies, and who is to say that Stubb's racing horse pictures are any less accurate a vision of the event than this powerful image by A User?

(OR TWO)

ded from the rest of the collection, since the latter are more concerned with recreating the powerful images we all associate with the media, asking us to more deeply examine our personal relationship with the electronic screen and the printed page. We owe it to ourselves to undertake this bondage with the artist, for he has struggled with his own conscience to awaken our eyes to his own peculiar vision, and if an artist is to run so terrible a risk as a severed ear or an anti-social disease, then this sacrifice must be reciprocated with an equal intensity of appreciation on the part of the onlooker.





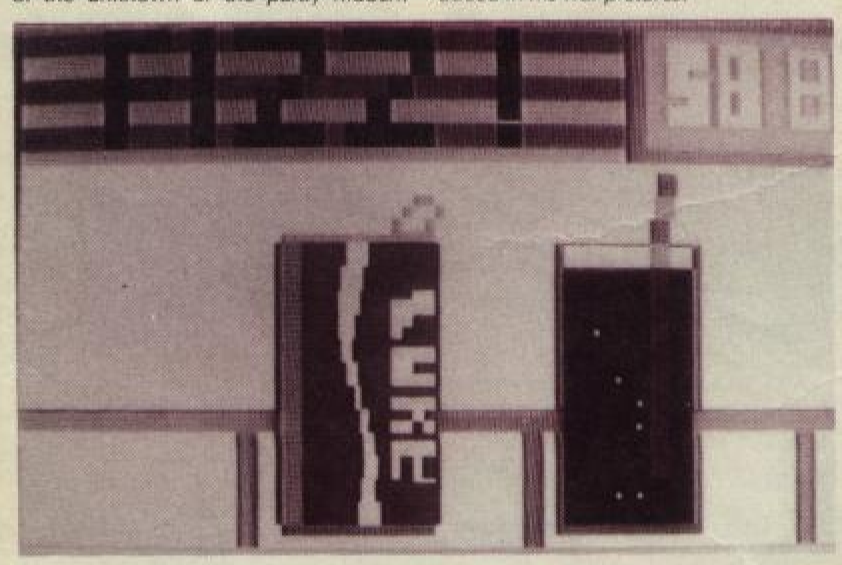
THE TIGER AT NIGHT and THE POLAR BEAR IN HIS SNOWY DOMAIN
Here are two pictures with a common theme; the artist, TAS, is concerned to demonstrate the thin crust of ice that covers the abyss over which we all tread in fear. Beneath the obvious lies the terror of the unknown or the partly hidden. Camouflage is the means by which we present ourselves to the outer world, hiding away our inner depths from view, offering only the dangerous to our fellows. These powerfully minimal images are as horrific as anything Goya produced in his war pictures.



BOGIE
As the advent of the camera altered people's preceptions of the real world they had taken for granted, so film and television has had its effect. Once, the sight of a leafy green tree excited emotions, now we have new heroes, Bogart being a seminal influence. Stu Jackson's portrait accurately captures the self-effacing cynicism of this attractive character, the jagged cigarette held casually between his lips symbolising the actor's fractured personnae.



JULIAN RIGNALL
Stu Collier sets out with this work, to elevate the ordinary into the superhuman, but employs a comic strip overlay of humour to defuse a potentially explosive image. Picasso-esque forms of cubism strip away the complexities of real perspective to allow us to concentrate on the essential, letting us see Julian Rignall for what he really is — some cubes, cylinders and triangles.



FIZZ!
Long ago Warhol elevated the humble detritus of modern life to the status of objects worthy of attention. The sheer realism of his Campbell's Soup and Coca Cola cans horrified, then delighted the art world. Fizz! has opted sensibly to heighten the pop image seen here by aggressive use of blocky graphics, distancing us from Warhol's preoccupation with shock value, so that, once again, we can see the image for what it is — a Coke can.



GARY & ROCKFORD
Another magazine-inspired image is this one of from A N Other User ZZAP! assistant editor, Gary Penn. The character of Rockford is a deliberate distancing technique — note how he is drawn in simple outline compared to the sweeping brushwork used for Gary, heightening the impression that fantasy and reality are inextricably mixed up in this bulldog-jawed figure.

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BACK NUMBERS
Don't miss out on earlier issues!

ZZAP! 64 has taken off like a blast of lightning! If you have been unable to obtain copies of issue 1 or 3, NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!

We keep a limited stock of back numbers to ensure your collection is complete, after all, we wouldn't want any gaps in those ZZAP! binders, which will be available shortly.

No 1 May 1985	● Towny Crowther ● Staff of Karnath map/solution ● Music Programs ● Lords of Midnight map ● Elite ● Shadowfire
No 2 June 1985	● OUT OF STOCK
No 3 July 1985	● Dropzone ● Entombed map ● Airwolf map ● Arcade bonanza ● Paradroid diary I ● Chess v Chess
N0 4 August 1985	● Fourth Protocol/Exploding Fist/Beach Head II/ ● Shadowfire map ● Denton Designs ● Paradroid diary II
No 5 September 1985	● Summer Games II/Frankie/Skyfox ● 64 Surgeries ● Paradroid diary III ● Terminal Man starts ● Spy v Spy II/Mercenary previews ● Flying High — simulations
No 6 October 1985	● Pet Person ● Wizardry/Nexus previews ● Electronic Pencil Co ● Zzapstick! ● Paradroid diary IV ● Flying High II
No 7 November 1985	● Paradroid Gold Medal ● Little Computer People ● Zzapstick! ● Pull out poster ● Masterblaster II
No 8 December 1985	● Zoids/Elektraglide previews ● Kiddie games ● Electrosound Gold Medal ● David Crane Interview ● Batalyx/Scarbaeus/ACE
No 9 Christmas Special	● Andrew Braybrook ● Archer Maclean ● Minter Strikes Back ● Rockford's Annual Roundup ● Inside ZZAP! Towers ● Readers' Awards ● 2000AD Speak ● Oliver Frey's art ● Underwurlde Map I
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THE LUCASFILM INTERVIEW

*This is the second and concluding part of **GARY PENN**'s gruelling long distance phone marathon with the innovative programming team at **Lucasfilm**. If you missed last month's part, sorry, because it stopped as abruptly as this one starts (space problems as usual). Gary had spoken at length to **DAVID FOX**, Project Leader for **RESCUE ON FRACTALUS** before being handed over to **CHARLIE KELLNER**, Project Leader for **THE EIDOLON**. Finally he talked to **NOAH FALSTEIN**, Project Leader for **KORONIS RIFT**, in the middle of which the editor's heavy hand came down. So now we pick up again, discussing conversions from Atari to Commodore 64 machines. For the home team it's Gary Penn, and on the other side of the Atlantic and American continent it's . . .*

THE LUCASFILM INTERVIEWS: PART THREE CONTINUED — NOAH FALSTEIN (PROJECT LEADER FOR *KORONIS RIFT*)

'Ron Gilbert, who is our Commodore programmer, we hired expecting him to do a fairly straight conversion, but early on he became involved in the design process and one thing that we're very proud of is that the actual program was identical for very large parts of **Koronis**. Since we use all the same development system here, we actually used the same files and identical programs for most of the internal parts of the game and even a fair amount of the graphics.

'Really, all that we had to do that was specifically different was when you get down to the very lowest level of drawing the pixels on the screen. That helped us a great deal, particularly later on, because it became very easy to add some new software and new changes, that it was just a matter of a few minutes work usually to adapt them over to the other machines once they had been written for one machine. By the end, chunks were being written first on the Commodore and first on the Atari and swapped back and forth interchangeably.'

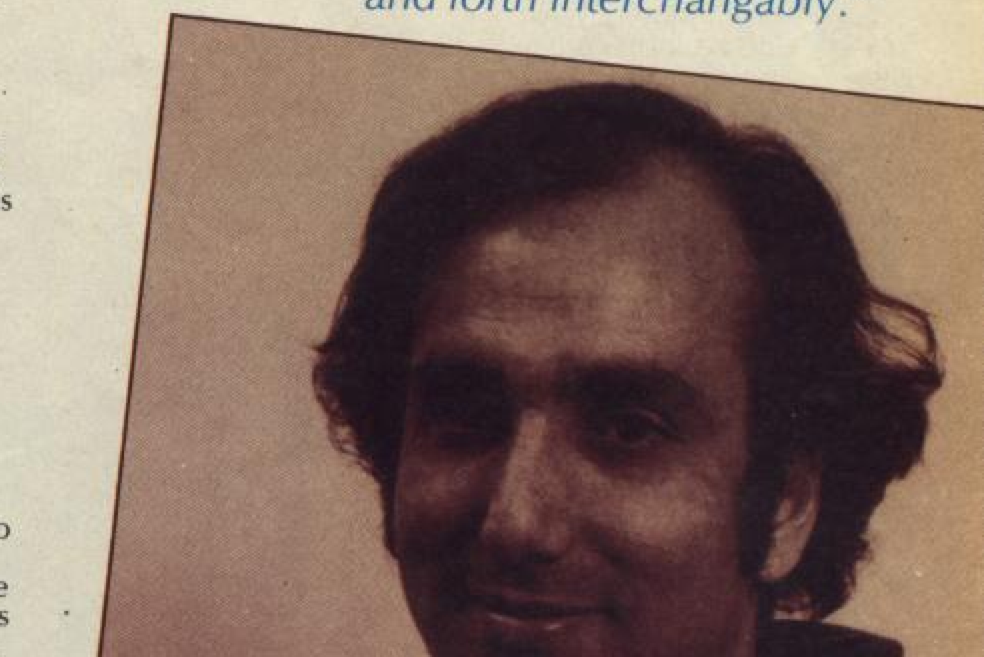
Noah worked only worked on **Koronis Rift** as Gary discovered when asking him about his overall involvement with the company. 'No, I came in just at the end of the development cycle for **Rescue** and **Ballblazer**, and I helped a very minor amount with some of the testing and the polishing. But really about the only credit I can take for it is that I get to have my picture in the back of the **Rescue** manual, and that's about it.'

Of course no game's development is complete without a game testing session. Noah explained the procedure to our man with the mouthpiece. 'Well, we test them first internally in that we have available people who will come in and our co-workers will pilot them and take a look at them. And also Epyx, who did our domestic marketing and production, provided some playtesters for us. Some kids who'd played their games and had sent in the cards expressing an interest to help, and they brought them in for — I guess for **Koronis** we had two sessions.'

FROM MACHINE TO MACHINE

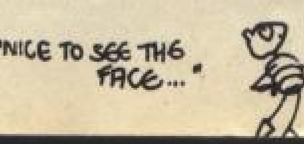
So considering that the Lucasfilm projects were originally envisioned as an Atari experiment, what brought about the decision to market versions for other machines? 'That was because the original games group was started through Atari. There were some very close ties to Atari and it wasn't until Atari folded and changed hands really, that we ended up making them for other computers — although there were some plans early on to make the conversions anyway. The reason that we ended up primarily with Atari games at the beginning was because we were dealing so closely with Atari. We're generally of the opinion that the Atari is a better computer for graphics at least, and it's easier to do fairly spectacular things on it. But of course our Commodore programmers are just as excited about the Commodore 64. It's really a matter of viewpoint. There are things that you can do on each computer that will show it off best, and that's what we've been trying to do — we're trying to emphasise on each one.'

"By the end, chunks were being written first on the Commodore and first on the Atari and swapped back and forth interchangably."



NOAH FALSTEIN — Project Leader for 'Koronis Rift', a designer with a wide sense of vision.

"There are things that you can do on each computer that will show it off best, and that's what we've been trying to do."





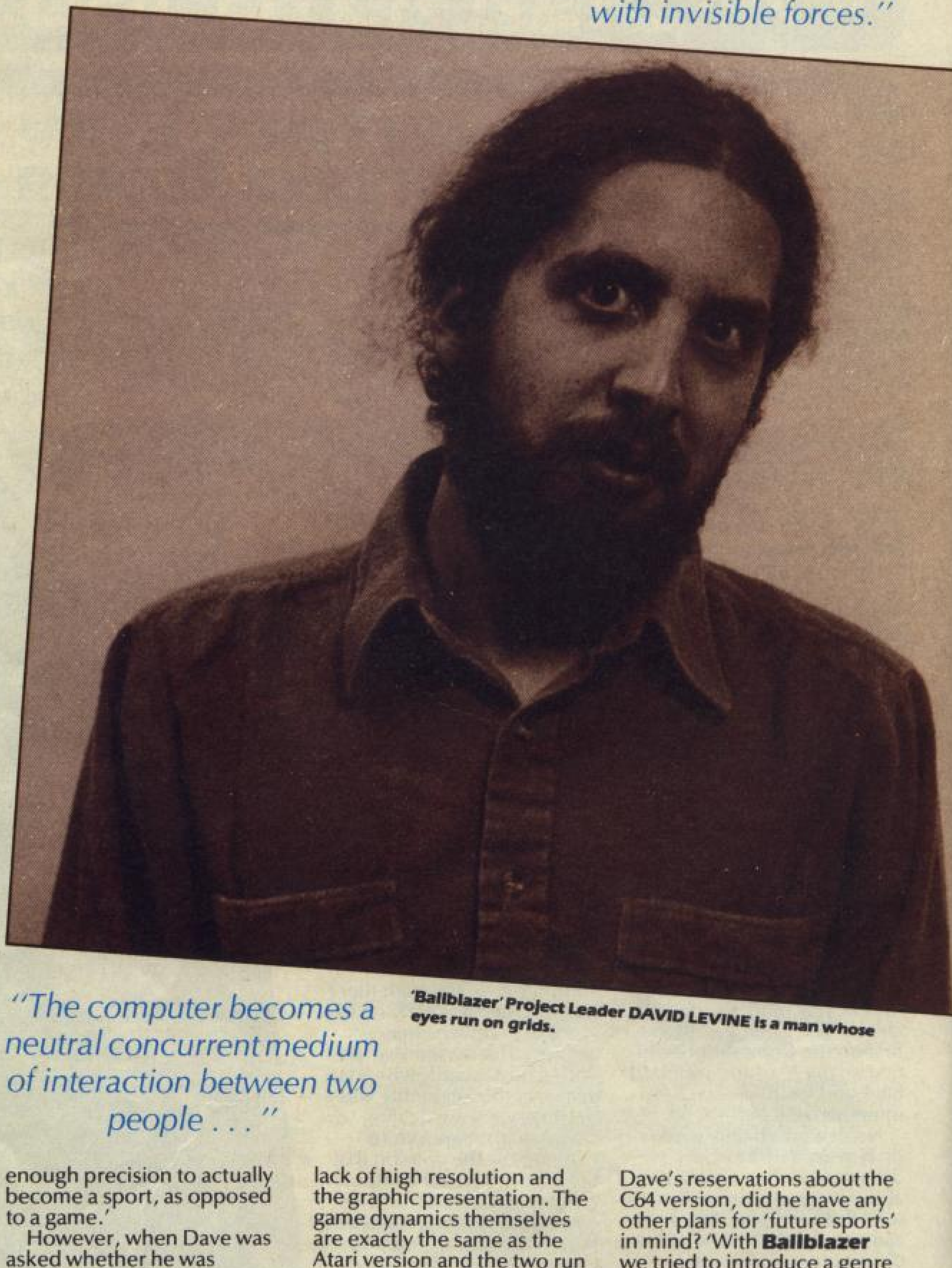
THE LUCASFILM INTERVIEWS: PART FOUR — DAVE LEVINE (PROJECT LEADER FOR *BALLBLAZER*)

"I've always wanted to build a device which allowed people to play with invisible forces."

It was easy enough for Gary to begin asking Dave questions about this game as it is almost worlds apart from the other Lucasfilm games in terms of style. Where and how was the concept for **Ballblazer** originated?

'Okay, well, you have to keep in mind it preceded all of the other Lucasfilm titles, except **Rescue**, which was developed at the same time,' began Dave. 'I've always wanted to build a device which allowed people to play with invisible forces, such as magnetic fields, and to have these things manifest in such a way that you can actually manipulate forms from action into distance, like you have some kind of mechanism to play with. The original conception of the game was to provide as realistic an environment as possible and to keep people as an important part, it is necessary to involve more than one person in it.

'Then it becomes a social interaction — the computer becomes a, or is in the case of **Ballblazer**, a neutral concurrent medium of interaction between two people. You do not play against the computer or you're not testing your skills or abilities against someone's program, but instead you're given an equal opportunity to play against another person.'



'Ballblazer' Project Leader DAVID LEVINE is a man whose eyes run on grids.

THE INHUMAN PLAYER

"The computer becomes a neutral concurrent medium of interaction between two people . . ."

When asked about problems with the artificial intelligence required, Dave replied. 'The only problem with the artificial intelligence was that we had to put it in. The game is a two player game and it was designed to be as such. Atari, at the time of development, insisted on having a one player version because that was their company policy, and so we hooked up the computer, actually worked a little bit of artificial intelligence for the droid partner idea — the practice partner. But they don't play like humans. They're not intended to play like humans. They're also not intended to be entertaining — the game is strictly a two player game. A lot of attention was paid to constructing the game in such a manner it was something like table tennis, where you have an inert physical system that moves about with computed high enough precision to actually become a sport, as opposed to a game.'

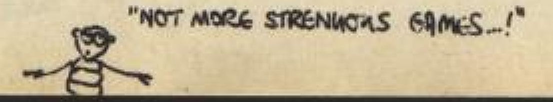
However, when Dave was asked whether he was satisfied with the Commodore version his reply was, 'Truthfully, no!'

Gary mentioned the lack of sound effects but was otherwise surprised by Dave's reply. Mr Levine elaborated, 'Well, I just don't think enough attention was paid to them (the sound effects). The person who originally did the sound effects for the game is no longer with us, and that was one of the problems. But, the major problem I think with the Commodore version is its lack of high resolution and the graphic presentation. The game dynamics themselves are exactly the same as the Atari version and the two run at exactly the same speed. So, that was of primary importance — in order to make the game play the same as the Atari version. The game originally was not designed with conversion in mind, and so it made extensive use of the advanced hardware in the Atari, so as to perform the animation of the grid and so on.'

MORE FUTURE SPORTS

Bearing in mind some of Dave's reservations about the C64 version, did he have any other plans for 'future sports' in mind? 'With **Ballblazer** we tried to introduce a genre of first person video sport, and my hope is that it will be maintained and advanced by our group and that the genre will be developed. I personally don't have an interest in further developing the genre — my interest was in creating it. At this point I'll be moving on to creating a new genre of a different type.'

But perhaps most astonishing of all was Dave's inexperience in the computer games field. 'It's the only video game I've ever written.



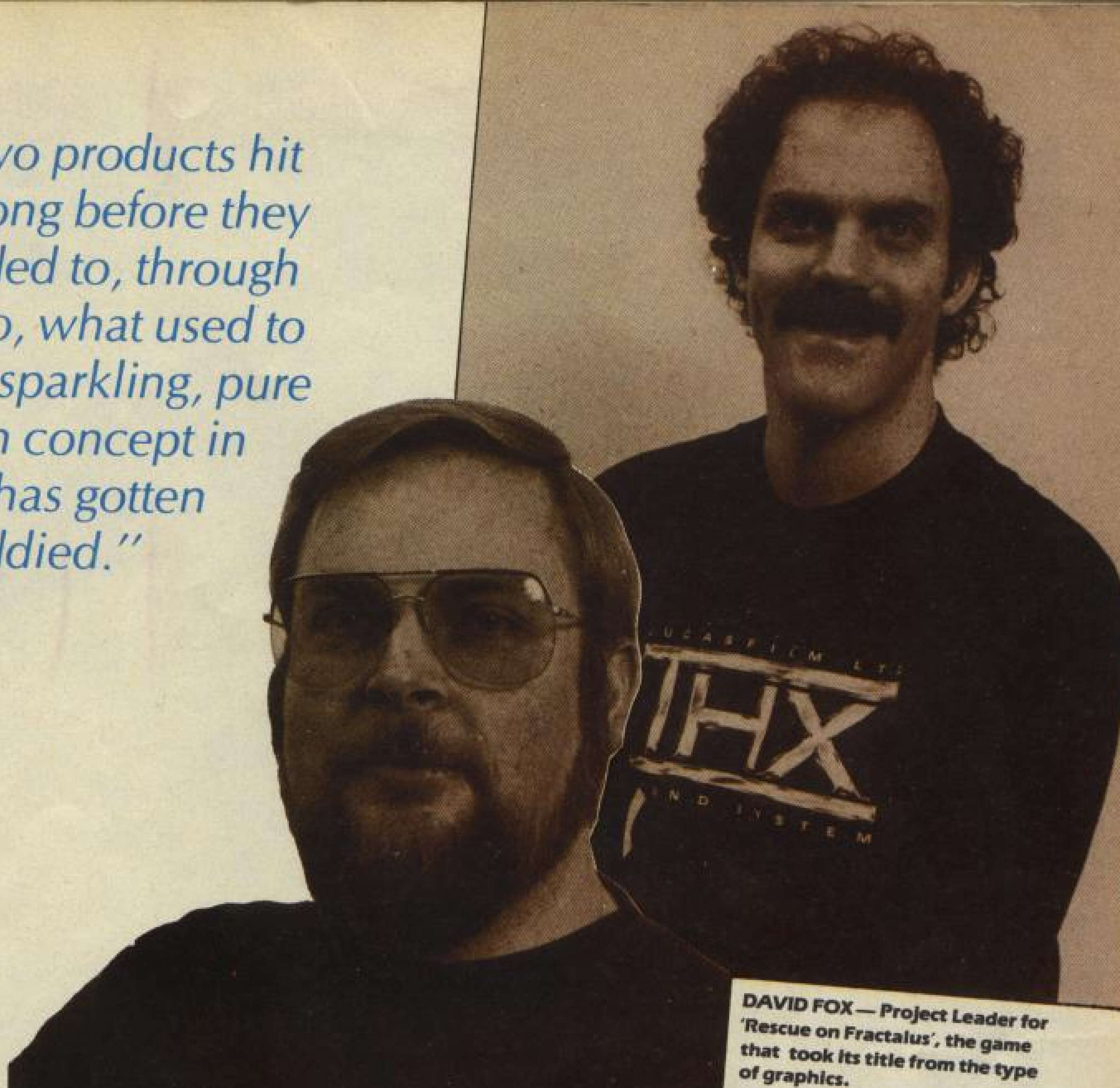
"The first two products hit the public long before they were intended to, through piracy . . . so, what used to be, to me, a sparkling, pure and clean concept in games has gotten muddied."

I was a computer scientist by profession, and hired by the company into the games division. I've always liked computer games and decided that well, if I'm going to do this, then I should write one that I will enjoy playing — that is done right. I approached the problem from a computer science point of view, and what was relatively rare, or unusual, in computer games was to provide a mathematical model of an environment that's being simulated, and to provide a program which renders the mathematical model in some form of first person perspective. It was myself and Peter Langston who worked on the game. Peter did the music and the artificial intelligence for the droids. It took roughly a year of development.

'It's unfortunate that it (the Atari version) hadn't gotten marketed sooner — I don't know if you're familiar with the history of the first two products, but they hit the public long before they were intended to, through piracy. There was a version of Commodore **Ballblazer** that was deemed unacceptable for market by us, and it was rewritten. And that one got out as well. So, what used to be, to me, a sparkling, pure and clean concept in games has gotten muddied. It's an unfortunate thing — hopefully the game itself will have enough integrity to stay it out. The intention of the game is to provide something that can be moved to all future machines — the basic games concept itself is valid regardless of the hardware, and then newer machines will just have fancier graphics, faster frame rates and higher precision.

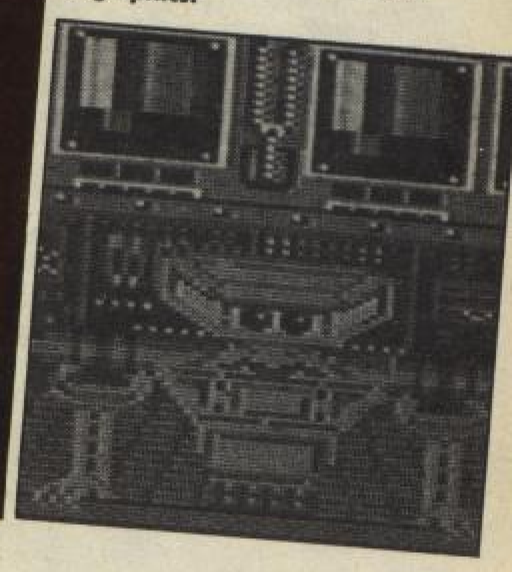
'It's an extremely complex program, but the complexity is internal. And the complexity is not an arbitrary kind of complexity as most games that I see, are. This has a coherent kind of complexity, in that we're modelling some pretty subtle aspects of high precision of a physical system — it's really a physical simulation, and the reason that it's complex to the player is because natural physical situations — are complex. The complexity comes from the precision and the resolution of its computation, and what it does is allow the player to react at very fine and subtle levels of skill, with a high degree of timing, precision and accuracy. And this is something that just has never, never appeared in any other computer game.

'The only things that have ever come close are say, the old Lunar Lander games — those are also high precision physical simulations and you had to be really good — but they were flat. The whole idea behind this was to provide an alternate physical reality. There's no — there's very little attention paid to contriving the situation, and contriving roles and that for the player. Instead, what we tried to do with it is put the player into an artificially created, natural situation and it actually comes through in the richness, the energetic effect so that it's not a contrivance — it's a natural outgrowth. It's a reflection of my design philosophy. You can be assured that the next thing you'll see from me will be based on the very same principles.'



DAVID FOX — Project Leader for 'Rescue on Fractalus', the game that took its title from the type of graphics.

CHARLIE KELLNER - Project Leader for 'The Eidolon', seen here sporting a THX T-shirt, a reminder of George Lucas' origins.



After a couple of hours spent running up Lucasfilm's phone bill, the interview was brought to a conclusion. On the other side of the world, some of the most gifted and experimental games programmers around, began their day no doubt planning their next masterpiece. Meanwhile, in that tiny haven of West Midlands civilisation called Ludlow, some tired journalists were packing up and heading for the Bull Inn, now eagerly anticipating Lucasfilm's next title but more importantly to get some cool beer to refresh poor Gary Penn's throat.

ZZAP! 64

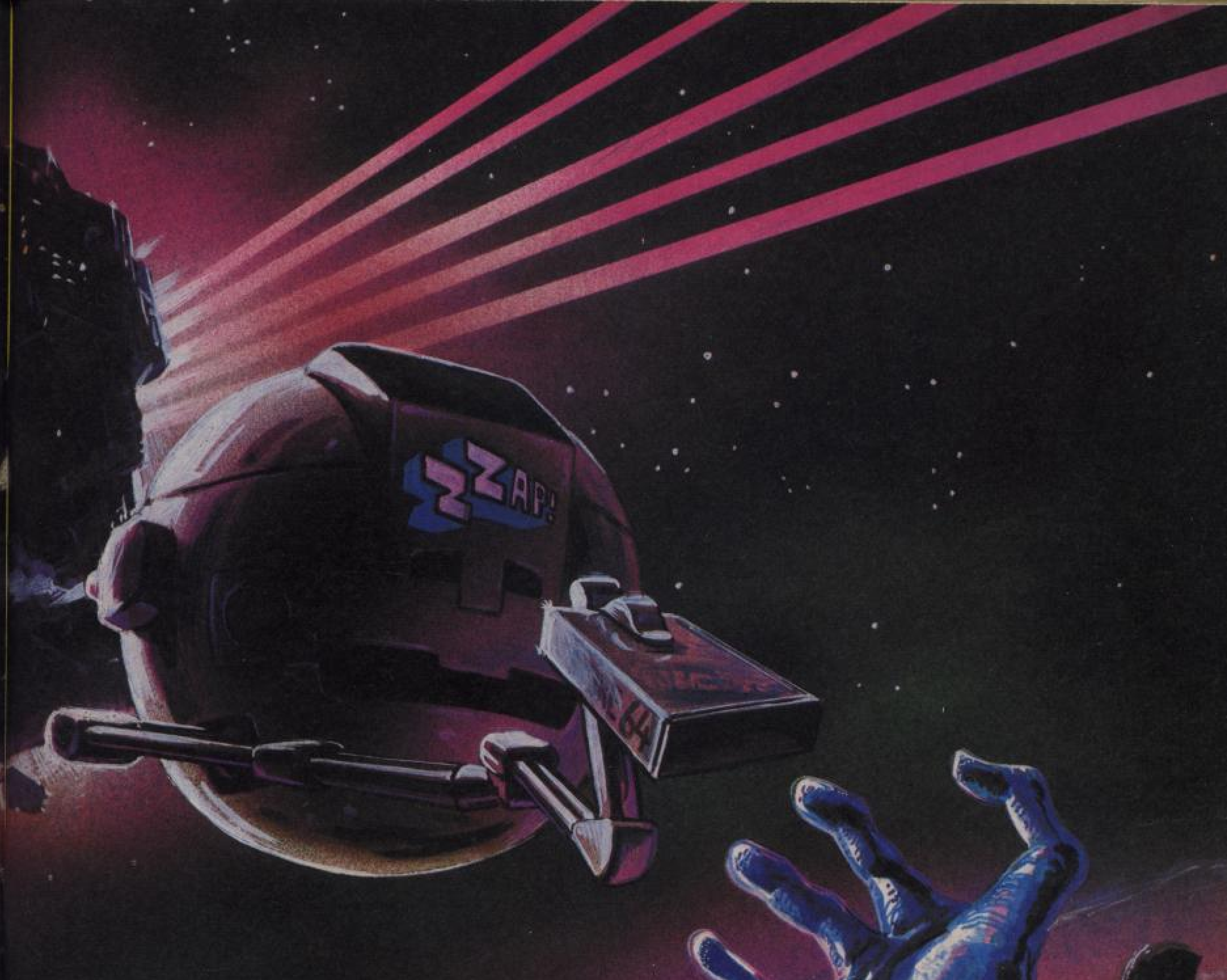
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THERE I WAS, WALKING DOWN THE HIGH STREET, WHEN WHO SHOULD I BUMP INTO BUT . . .



ANDREW BRAYBROOK

GARY LIDDON's a right gossip when he's out shopping in Ludlow's main thoroughfare, the High Street. He can't resist stopping for a chat when he just happens to bump into someone. Last month it was Tony Crowther, and now, coming out of the supermarket loaded down by a shopping bag full of PG Tips tea bags, who should he spot but Andrew Braybrook popping in for some groceries and a chance to redeem some 5p off coupons on Tesco disks.



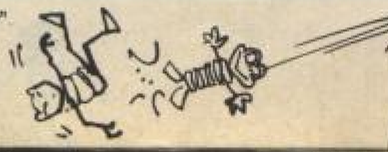
Gosh, if it isn't young Andy Braybrook. Haven't seen you since Wednesday. What have you been doing with yourself recently then?

I've been working on *Uridium* and when I last saw you I'd just finished working on the character set. Since then I've been working flat out to get the coding in and putting in all the good ideas that Steve Turner gets every now and again like 'Wouldn't it be good if' . . . demanding the impossible.

I know the feeling . . .

We've been developing a game idea. We had to go up to Norwich to study the enemy, see what there was in the arcades and to see if we could get any more ideas for the graphics, and then generally we've been slaving away until all hours of the evening. It's all been coming together very much quicker this time than it did with *Paradroid* where we used to have problems at various - different stages that we would be battling with for weeks on end, but with this one I seem to have discovered how to program at last.

"I WALK DOWN THE STREET AND WHO DO I BUMP INTO...?"



Actually I can write a routine now and it doesn't matter how difficult it is as usually after about two tests it's working. Which is great — every now and then something totally illogical happens that I can't explain, but I think I'm getting quite good at this programming lark, I could probably make a living out of it!

Uridium is all finished now though, it just needs tuning up and letting the test pilots play it and getting their opinions on it. I've had some of the test pilots look at the game and they seem to be very happy with it. I'm used to getting 26 point critcisms in from some people but they seem to like this one. So I'm going all out for the arcade look; I don't want it to look like a cut-down arcade machine, I'm trying to write a game that looks like it should BE in an arcade, and it's working so far.

I was reading through the bit we did on you a few issues back, so I know how you started in programming, but how did it feel when you swapped from the Dragon to the Commodore?

It's a bit different working on the Commodore — the first thing I did was to convert a Spectrum game. The Commodore, I learned, has not as powerful a CPU as the Spectrum. It doesn't have the power to be able to get on and do a job. The version that I finished with was not as fast as when run on the Spectrum. I tried therefore to enhance it to use the colours that were available and I used the sprites as best as I could but it never took off as a conversion. No conversion can work off a program that is so orientated towards what the Spectrum can do — the Commodore isn't going to do it as well. So from that I learnt that a different system of working would be required to give a game that Commodore look, Commodore games do have a distinct look, as each computer has its own look. I would think that converting games is dangerous. Either design a game so that it will work on lots of machines, which will limit the design so that it will not necessarily use any of the machines well. Or you've just not got to want to convert.

I thought the Ultimate conversions were quite good and didn't work that badly, also *Sweevo's World* is now on the Amstrad and it seems almost identical.

Well, something like *Sabre Wulf* I mean, that would go anywhere.

I didn't think they did *that* very well, codes weren't very good, they managed to get the pixels flickering on the corridor.

The meanies just appear, and that is a cop-out as far as I'm concerned. There's no point in bumping them into another one — you've just got to zap em. I was impressed with the look of *Knight Lore* on the Amstrad they actually used colour — you can actually tell that they've got a couple of artists working for them. Their programmers seem to be bottom down programming. They've gone for colours again, and they've got attribute problems. They seem to want colour and they're just overlapping them all over the place willy nilly. I think that there'll always be a colour problem on the Spectrum and they should just accept this and not bother too much with colour. They'll get a more professional look without mucking the colours up. Steve Turner spent most of his time trying to program sprites into his game, a task that is taken for granted on the Commodore and yet he spent most of his time programming in order to try to simulate sprites, to get them to move in front of each other — which he did do in the end. It's good but if you spend so much time on that you don't have the time to get on with the game. Which in his case slowed the game down. It was running at about six cycles a second, whereas the Commodore would have been running at about twenty five — seventeen is the slowest on *Paradroid* and fifty on **Uridium**. Obviously when it's running faster you can get a much smoother, more positive game I think. It reacts more to what you're doing much more smoothly when you're accelerating for example.



Taken at a recent visit to the Bull Inn, Ludlow, Andrew Braybrook (left) and 'his boss' Steve Turner (right) flank Julian Rignall.

People do notice too. Subconsciously more.

Yes, that's another thing if you do something really well, people DON'T notice it. For example in *Uridium* where I'm flicking the screens doing the titles, the flicking is between two totally different modes and I had it set up and I was flicking the modes at the wrong point and I was getting flashes of colour before I'd set the next screen up. It was very messy and I'm sure I'd get marked down for that. But I won't get marked up for fact that it's doing it and you can't see the screens. If you do something really well people don't notice it — like the smooth scroll. I spent a lot of time getting that really smooth, but so what? Nobody's going to notice that, but if I'd done it badly they'd say 'Right, that's not so good,' but if you do it averagely nobody minds.

I still think that people do notice it, but it only has an effect at a subconscious level.

Yes, if the person who's playing the game is satisfied enough to want to load it the next day then it's worked, which is all I can really ask for. Though it is nice to be appreciated. But there are a lot of people (reviewers) who don't do their job very well. Dare I say it, in reading some reviews of *Paradroid* it's blatantly obvious that a lot of people have not played that game for longer than ten minutes. They can't even get their blurb right about what they do say about the game, and you know damn well that they haven't played the game for more than ten minutes and haven't had a chance to see what's in there and just slap down the review and say that it's quite pretty but no more than slightly above average — which is very disappointing.

And it's partly our fault because we bow to the magazines' printing schedules, so we feed them the game early and they have two days in which to rush a review of it. Whereas if we were to say 'Oh stuff it, we'll go over to the next magazine,' then they would have three weeks to play the game and suss it out properly. I'd much rather people did that. If I've spent five months writing this game I don't see why they should spend just ten minutes playing it. It can be quite disheartening.

I can imagine.

Well I do try to put a lot of things in there and work hard on the presentation.

You did get rewarded for presentation in ZZAP!

Well yes, but you lot did actually play the game. Which is how it should be. I wouldn't want you to play it to death, to start to 'turn off' as you see new things coming out, but it's nice to be appreciated, thank you very much. There have been some good reviews as well, you can tell that they've played the game but I don't know why some people bother. They're just journalists doing a job, they're not into computers in any way. I'd rather see the game go to someone who knows what the machines can do and therefore know what to expect. That's part of the problem. Having worked on utilities on mainframes I know what sort of things people expect from software — they don't expect it to crash out just because they typed in something wrong. They don't expect to have to fill the whole in again because they keyed something in wrong. It's all to do with standards and presentation otherwise the software's naff. It's got to be user-friendly. A lot of software isn't and it's something that I like to work on hard. I want my software not to frustrate anyone outside of the game. It's this sort of difference between the game that's in there, and the program where the program is the interface between you, the player and the game, and that interface should be totally transparent. You shouldn't feel that the program is holding you up from playing the game by only pulling the joystick once every three seconds, or something, and a lot of games are frustrating because they hold you up from playing the game by pausing for fifteen seconds while they blow you up.

That's why I've got my test pilots. It's annoying sometimes seeing what people get away with. That's where presentation comes in. It all depends on how much time you want to spend on it. I do like to work on the game design to make sure that the game works. After all that is the most important part. We are writing a game, not just pretty sprites that move around the screen to great music and backdrops. Once again though, I do think that some people do get away with murder.

I must admit that I'm not that impressed by your *Winter Games* review. I don't see why you should have to spend that long loading stuff in. You've been reviewing the disk version. I think that you should watch out



for a tape version and try that. Having played *Winter Games* on tape myself, you spend more time loading than you spend playing the game. After every game it loads in the National Anthem, which could surely be hidden away in some cubby hole in the Commodore. Then it loads in the next event which is a 10K pretty backdrop, which they can do, having decided to load in each game. But at the end of the day, that's all it is. There's some nice control work that they've put in. They do think about that, but it's still a bit naughty. I don't really think that any of those games singly could sit on a Mastertronics shelf because they're not going to hold your interest for more than 15 minutes. It's only the fact that each game is part of an overall structure of the eight that holds it all together. It' a bit naughty that. They should try to hold them all in memory and compromise on the backdrop. A lot of the games are quite similar and could have used the same backdrop. It would be nice if everyone had a disk drive but tape loading is still the greatest portion of the market.

How big do you think the market really is?

There are over half a million Commodore owners out there but not many of them buy a specific game. I don't think any Commodore game has sold more than 50,000 yet, allowing for the fact that you have to take the number quoted by the manufacturers and divide by something or other. I mean, they're not on sale or return and distributors are not going to sit around with thousands on stock, so most of them are in supermarkets and so on. A lot of them are dead stock.

Moving on from the dead to the living, where does most of the inspiration for your games come from?

I do like to keep my eyes open on the arcades, I must admit, to see what sort of games are in and talking to my test pilots is always a good way, seeing what they enjoy playing. Areas of inspiration sort of build up as the game goes along. I seem to start more from a technical angle. I ask myself, 'What did I do last time?' and try to improve on that and, 'What would I like to see on the screen?' and develop it slowly. I certainly don't start out at the beginning of a game and know what it's going to end up like. *Uridium* has come along a lot quicker because I knew roughly what I wanted it to look like after looking at the arcades this year, but in the past it's been a slow process. Talking to friends and so on. Watching science fiction on the television — things like that. Seeing other people's games too and thinking, 'well I can do that and make it better.' I can see what they're getting at but they didn't take it far enough.

There are lots of different combinations; control modes and so on that I'd like to put in and so on. At the end of the day though, I want to be able to enjoy playing the games and I eventually do.

I'm usually pretty fed up with a game once I've finished it because I've been in front of it for months. I can live with *Paradroid* now. I had to leave it for a couple of months after I'd finished it but I can actually get back into it now.

What do you think about the way in which control routines have changed for games?

Well, with the control modes I'm playing with you can't just pick them up in few minutes. You've got to appreciate all the different sorts of effects going on, friction, gravity and so on and use them to your advantage. What I've changed in *Uridium* is that you've got no friction. Left and right will only accelerate you in those directions. You will only continue in those directions. Obviously, it wouldn't be appropriate for *Paradroid*, but *Uridium* tries to keep you on the move all the time. The control mode is the way in which to do this, to really let you develop a feel for the game. The letters that I've had show that is the thing that people comment on — the inertia effect. Most games still have this Space Invaders type of control. No speeding up and slowing down which is okay for simple concepts but as games are now becoming more advanced you need a more sophisticated vehicle to be able to perform its task. So as 'nasties' become more advanced you need a better equiped vehicle to deal with the more difficult task. It should only be the limitations of your own skill that gets you blown up in the end.

It's coming back to this idea of not being limited by the software. In *Dropzone* you don't get enough bullets, there are quite a lot and they're quite fast but when under a lot of pressure you've got to be Julian Rignall or you're going to be blown up. You've got to have the fire power to do the job. It's little things like that that can spoil an otherwise good game.

Have you any other hobbies at all?

Photography. I actually do a lot of the screen shots. I'm a great Doctor Who fan, I like watching films, and music is my other great love. I enjoy sitting upstairs and playing with computers and listening to loud music. I'm not quite as freaked out as Mr Minter though. But we do seem to like similar types of music.

It seems that within the computing fraternity most people seem to like the same types of music.

Yes. We're all the same sort of people really. I don't think anybody could be quite like Mr Minter though.

You said you had been looking in at the arcades recently. What's your next project going to be?

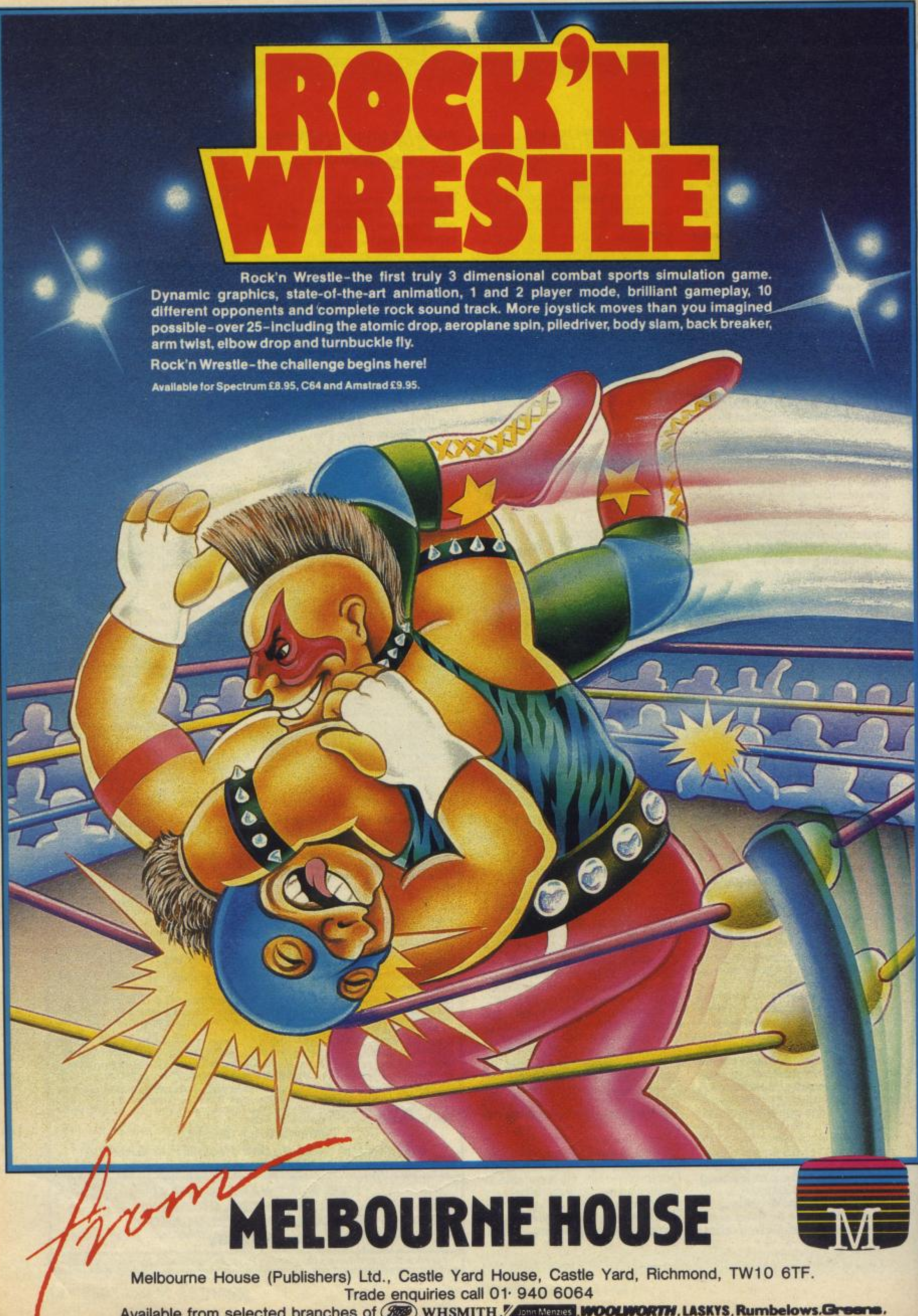
Somebody mentioned that I was doing a trilogy, *Paradroid* being the first one, but I don't know where they got that idea from. Well, after I've finished a game it's very much a case of sitting down and designing some character sets and hopefully that will inspire me to write a game. But I don't really have any firm plans concerning the Commodore. I'd like to write a game that doesn't involve a scrolling screen. I think that I've taken that to its limit now. It can't get any smoother than it has. It's very difficult to design a game that works and to get it to do so within a fixed screen and system. Scrolling isn't very nice but it does give you a larger playing arena, you don't feel confined.

I don't want to get involved in a 3D game where you go into the screen because that's much more difficult to judge what's going on. I mean, *Gyruss* was a super game in the arcade. I'd like to do something on a fixed screen somehow so I can use more of the CPU and do more in the game itself rather than spending it all on scrolling. It's all very open at the moment. ST Software, or Graft Gold as we're known now, are moving in January to 4 miles away, a little village called Witham. I'll have to catch a bus into work and stuff so I'll need a lot of extra time to do that, so once I've sorted that turmoil out I'll be ready to do something.

Anyway, talking of moving, I must push on with the shopping and get these 5p off tokens redeemed at exceptional value for money.

Yeah, it was nice bumping into you, Andrew, see you again soon.

Bye. **Ta ta.**


ROCK'N WRESTLE
Rock'n Wrestle-the first truly 3 dimensional combat sports simulation game. Dynamic graphics, state-of-the-art animation, 1 and 2 player mode, brilliant gameplay, 10 different opponents and complete rock sound track. More joystick moves than you imagined possible-over 25-including the atomic drop, aeroplane spin, piledriver, body slam, back breaker, arm twist, elbow drop and turnbuckle fly.
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A complete monthly guide by the infamous White Wizard for all 64 owners who prefer games involving typed commands rather than wiggled joysticks.

ZZAP! adventure



Hail and well-met, fellow wizards. This month, we are gathered together to discuss the latest and greatest, including a new adventure from arcade house Taskset, a real humdinger of a game from Activision, and something cute, comical, and cheap from Mastertronics. Stand by your staffs, my friends, and read on . . .



BORROWED TIME

Activision, £14.99 disk only



Oh boy, gedda a load of this one! Activision have followed up *Mindshadow* and the *Tracer Sanction* with a really excellent game featuring Sam Harlow, Private Detective. That's you, fellow wizards, and this is definitely a game to trade in a couple of bottles of Pipistrelle '79 for.

As the aforesaid Sam Harlow, you have to escape from the clutches of the New City criminals who are after your blood in a game that has so many excellent features that the White Wizard was at a loss as to what to tell you about first . . . Should it be the graphics?





They're quick on the draw, beautifully drawn, and finely detailed. There are a number of objects in them not mentioned in the text but which are nevertheless important in the game, so the pictures aren't just there for decoration — you have to check each one out fairly carefully. They also boast some very nice animated sequences as well. Washing hung out to dry and blowing in the wind, people drinking in bars, hoodlums letting fly at you in a New City backstreet . . . There are many nice touches like these that really make the display come alive and help lay on the atmosphere as thick as wild honey. Yessir, this is definitely a game to lick the lips over . . . Not only are the graphics nicely drawn, but they're also nicely scaled. This isn't just Ol' Whitey playing at being a pretentious art critic — it's just that I'm really a bit tired of having huge pictures thrust down my throat. *Mindshadow* was a good example — very pretty pics, but they dominated the display and left hardly any room for anything else. The White Wizard likes to have some pictures with his adventuring, but let's not have any arguments about what constitutes the real bones of an adventure — the location descriptions and messages, not the graphics. Graphics are great, but they shouldn't be allowed to take over, and in *Borrowed Time* they work just the way they should.

However, this program hasn't just got a pretty face, it's got brains too! The parser is excellent — not only does it understand sentences like 'Give the check to Hawkeye and then eat the hot dog', it also swallows 'it' when used to refer to a previously mentioned noun, lets you 'TAKE and DROP ALL', and will even allow you to TALK to other characters. And other characters there are in abundance. When you're not sipping scotch in the local bar and chatting to the barman, you're rescuing Mavis from one of the local baddies, or swapping lead visiting cards with the local heavies. Although none of these characters are truly interactive, the TALK to and SAY commands do at least give you the impression of carrying on a conversation, even if nobody actually says anything very much.

As if all that wasn't enough, there's even a very useful joystick option which allows you to enter a number of useful commands by moving an arrow about the screen and pointing at the relevant words, which are listed in panels on the right of the display. Using the joystick you can examine objects, move about, and even open windows and doors. Us Wizards, of course, use our wands to control the CPU directly, but for those of you with rather less charisma (and, more to the point, slower typing) the joystick option is a great boon. What I really liked about the joystick option on *Borrowed Time* was the way it supplemented, rather than limited, the game. Some 'joystick adventures' use the joystick for everything, with the result that 'everything' doesn't amount to very much. But here you can always enter more complex commands via the keyboard. And the responses are pretty hot too — trying to take an ashtray, for example, gets you the line 'The room would lose its ambience without the ashtray' and drinking Scotch in the bar elicits the immortal response 'The cheap hooch is a flaming river to your gut'!

There are numerous other points about this game that I could mention — the striking animated opening sequence, the very useful QUICKSAVE feature, the ingenious but totally logical puzzles, the occasional sound effects, and so on and so on. All I can say is that from the moment you start the game, and are flung headlong into a gunbattle with two of the local heavies, you're hooked. I remember, when *Mindshadow* first came out, looking forward to further releases from Activision. This game fully justifies my flag-waving on their behalf. It's humorous, tricky, addictive, and great fun. If you've got access to a drive, then beg, borrow, or buy this game.

Atmosphere 86%
Interaction 90%
Lasting Interest 81%
Value for Money 88%
Overall 90%

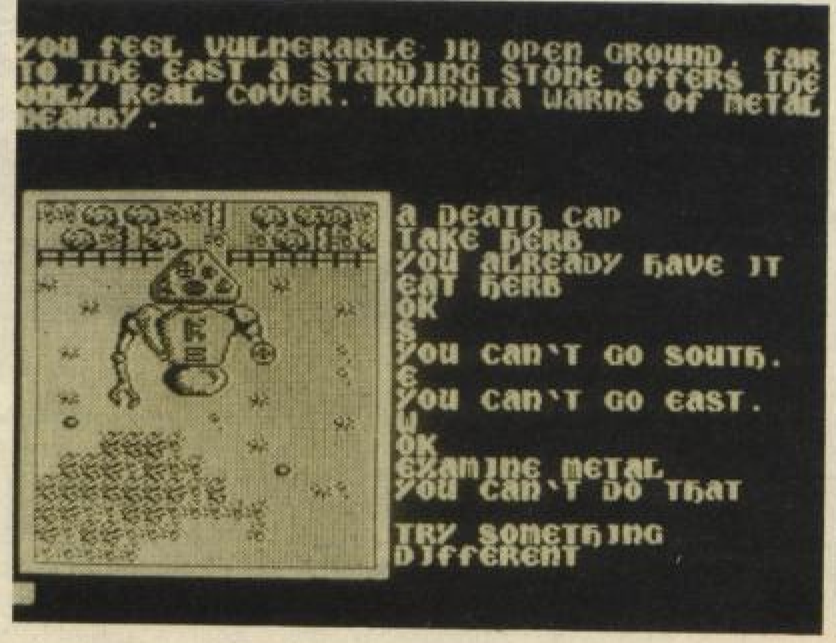
SOULS OF DARKON

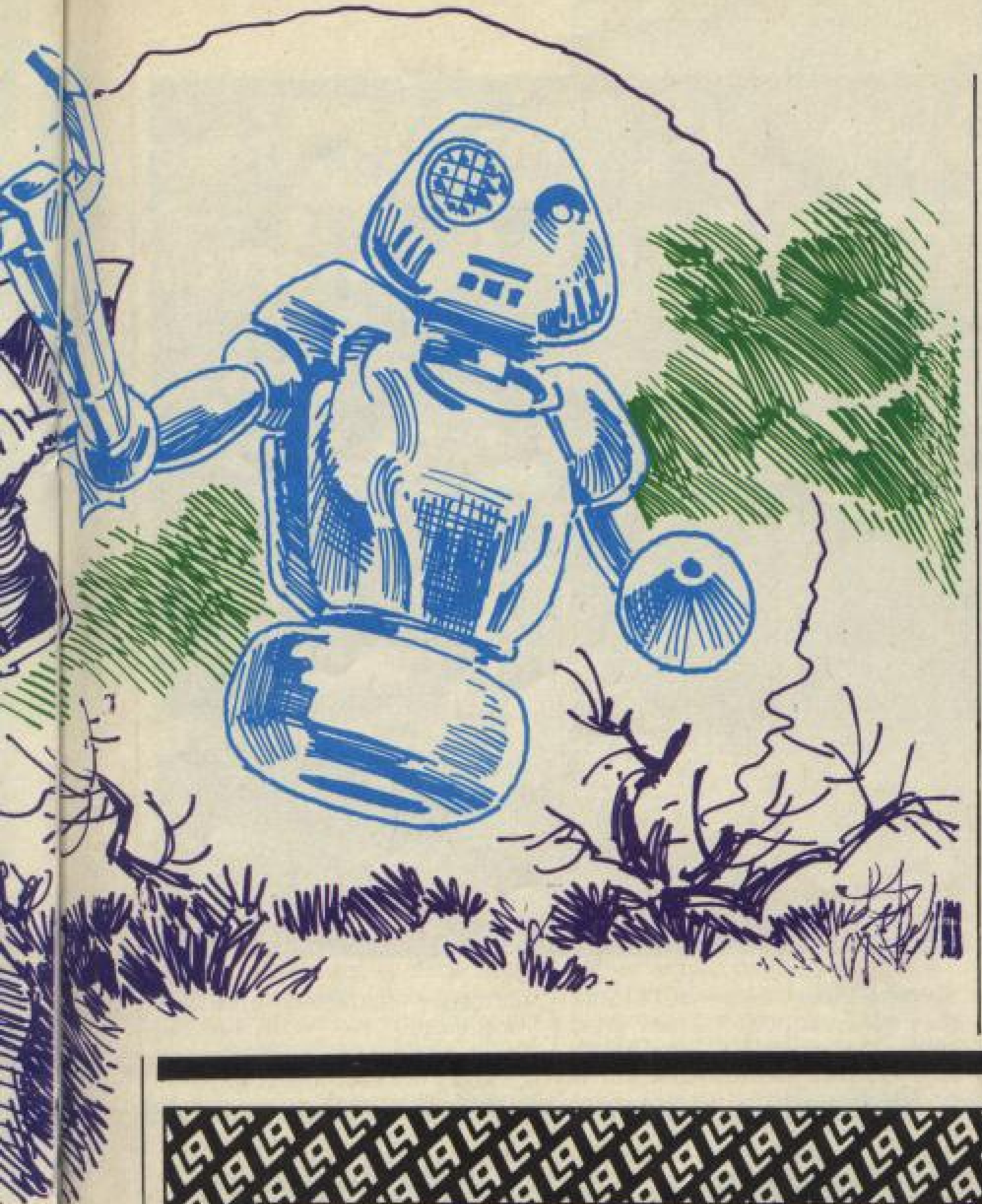
Taskset, £8.90 cass

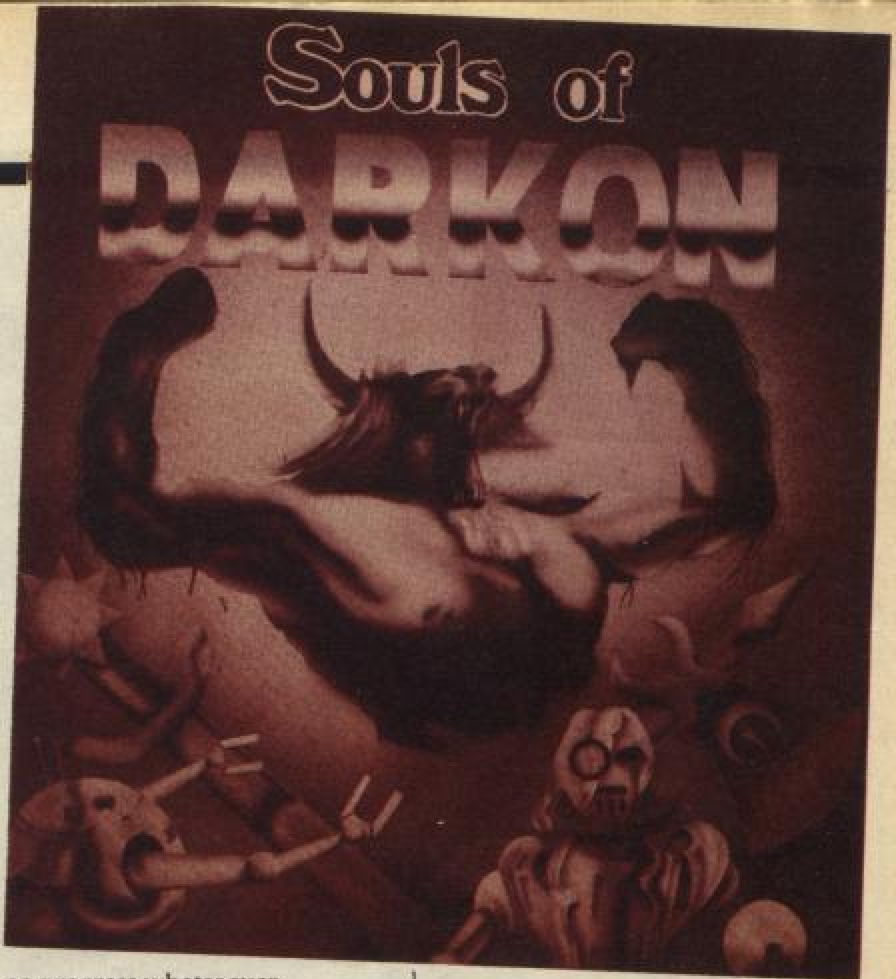


First, let's take a gander at this new release from Taskset, the software company that brought you *Super Pipeline*, *Jammin'*, and a host of other notable arcade games. It's always a pleasure (and a somewhat rare one these days) to see someone new entering the 64 adventure market, so how have the boys from Bridlington measured up? Well, one thing's for sure, they're not going to give Level 9 any sleepless nights. Not unless their next game is streets ahead of this one, anyway. I wouldn't go so far as to say it's a BAD game, just that it's distinctly awkward, occasionally far too obscure, and limited in scope. Since it's a first product, though, it deserves a closer look so here goes . . .

The plot, for starters, isn't exactly as fresh as new-mown hay. The planet Megron has fallen into the grip of the infamous Darkon and . . . OK, you-know-who's got the job of putting things right. You wander round the planet with a loyal Komputa droid hovering nearby and must indulge in various technological and mystical enterprises in order to crack the game. Let me say right here and now that I haven't got very far with *Darkon*. I've been playing it for some time now and what little progress I've made has been with the help of a friend - and SHE only knew the answers because (after much frustration) she phoned Taskset and asked for help. Us Wizards are made of sterner stuff, which in this case means we make







no progress whatsoever.

At first sight, *Darkon* looks quite attractive. I don't know how many locations there are, but each one has an illustration, displayed in rather offputting green shades to one side of the screen. The character set has been redesigned and the whole effect is, well, DIFFERENT, if not exactly beautiful.

The problems come when you start to move around and tackle the various puzzles that present themselves. Although the program claims to accept complex inputs like 'Attack the droid with the visor', in practice it tends either to reject most of your inputs or else to respond in a particularly uninspiring or unhelpful manner. For example, on attempting to 'Examine Komputa', who is

'hovering nearby', you're told it's not here. It is, though — at least it is in the location description. Even when you do manage to get some sort of dialogue going with the program, it tends to be rather lifeless. 'Examine monolith', you type, and 'Huge stone monolith' the program replies. Scintillating stuff . . . However, the real problem with *Darkon* is the way the program has been designed. It's difficult to put into words, but the White Wizard reckons that all adventurers have an inbuilt sense of logic which they develop in their encounters with other worlds and the inhabitants thereof. For example, if you found yourself confronted with a man-eating canary, you would first examine it and then, perhaps, give it something (or rather someone) to eat. However, if (after repeated attempts) you gave up and phoned the software house, only to be told that the way past the canary was to ask it if it liked Mars Bars, you would, I think, be entitled to feel a bit miffed. This may sound a bit off the point, but in fact it's exactly this sense of 'adventure logic' that's missing from *Darkon*. As a result, although you will make some progress in the end, you may find (as I did) that on solving a puzzle your feelings are more along the lines of 'How silly that puzzle was' rather than 'How clever I am for solving it'.

Perhaps part of the problem with *Darkon* is that although the plot itself is a bit uninspired, a lot of the puzzles are almost too original. What's that? I hear you say . . . TOO original?? What I mean is that they don't conform to that sense of 'adventure logic' that us



wizards share between us. And that means the game is tough going. It's also pretty limited with regard to the vocab. There's a command to list the available verbs, of which there are forty-five. In the days of programs with 1000$ vocabularies, this really isn't enough, especially when the game is going to set you back £8.90.

I'd like to be nice about *Darkon*, because I like Taskset and I think they've produced some great games in the past. But I think they should either stick to arcade games or else be prepared to sink a lot more time and development into their next adventure. It is 1986, after all, and adventures are no longer those rather silly little games that don't understand anything except LOOK and GO. Nowadays it's good graphics, interactive characters, and large vocabularies we want — not quirky green pics, off-beat puzzles, and unexaminable Komputas. Next please . . .

Atmosphere 42%
Interaction 35%
Lasting Interest 45%
Value for Money 30%
Overall 40%

ZZZZZZ . .

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

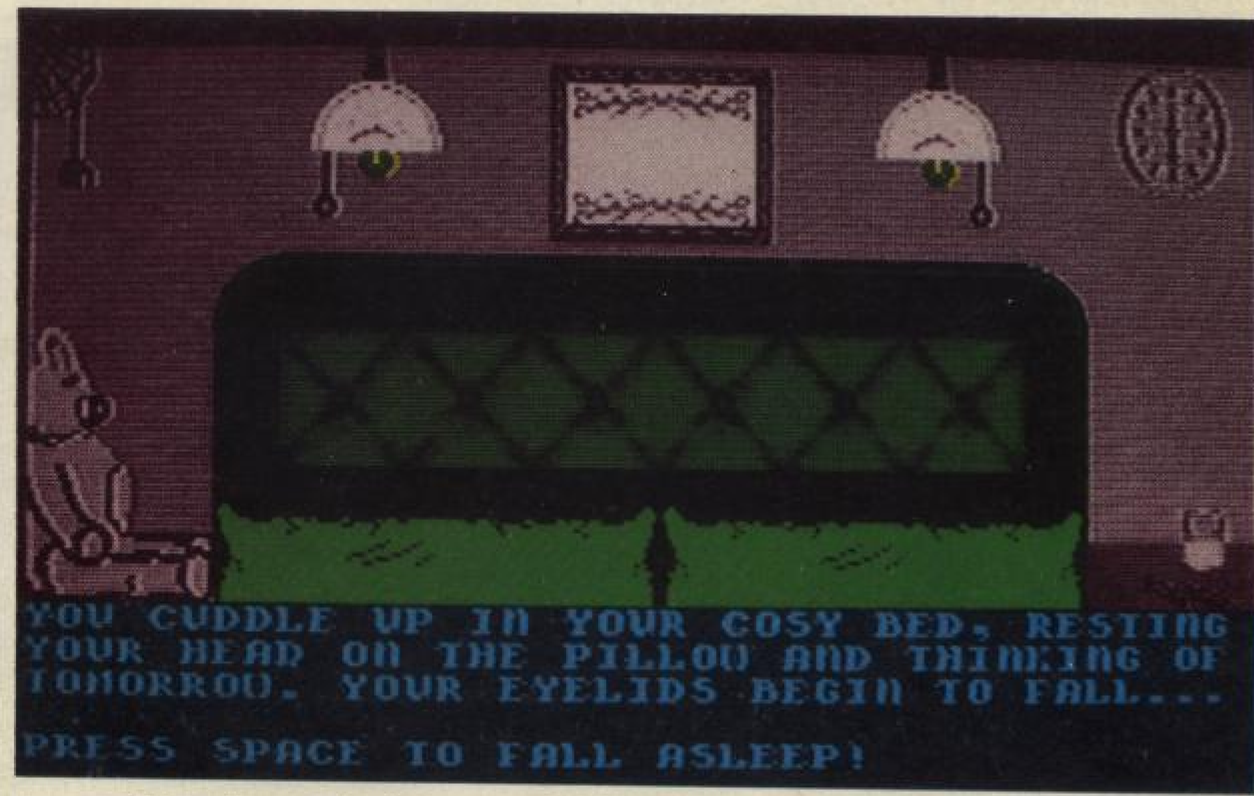
This game has all the ingredients of success, but ends up in the cat-litter tray. It pains me to have to say that, since I'm obviously eagerly awaiting someone who can bring out a good cheap adventure — and if anyone can do it Mastertonic ought to be able to. But, unfortunately, they haven't. Mastertronic deserve the gratitude of Wizards world-wide for rescuing Carnell Software a couple of years back and re-releasing the classic *Wrath of Magra*, but *Zzzzzz* . . . is a sad example of botched opportunities. It's an attractive game to look at. The graphics are detailed and quite well drawn. The screens are colourful, the character set has been redefined, and the SID chip is kept busy throughout pinging and ponging through a variety of musical and other effects. There's also a joystick option for selecting most of the common commands



such as GET and EXAMINE. One novel touch involves using the joystick to illuminate different points of the compass which then indicate which directions are open for movement. All this is good, clean, programming.

Alas, when it comes to the game itself, it's another story. In fact, it isn't really a story at all. The idea is that you've fallen asleep and found yourself in the land of Zzzzzz . . . You have to solve various puzzles and attempt, in the end, to wake yourself up. The problem with all this lies with the inane sense of humour that keeps cropping up, combined with some very illogical plot developments. For example, you don't die in the program when you get into trouble (which you can at any moment, and often for barely acceptable reasons). Instead, you are instantly transported to any one of a number of randomly chosen locations. You retain your possessions, so you might well find yourself swimming along beside the shore carrying a bucket, spade, and a bicycle. If you've ever tried to do this, you will know that it's not possible without casting some pretty nifty spells and wearing water-wings.

The vocabulary is very small, and the program gives you virtually no assistance when you get into trouble, beyond telling you to try something else, or simply saying it doesn't understand. There is very little blurb on the cassette inlay, so all the atmosphere and direction of the game relies on the program itself. Since the first few locations consist of an igloo, a hot sandy beach, and a frontier post guarded by a bandit, you can see that probability is being stretched to the limits. *Zzzzzz* . . . reminded me slightly of *Quest for the Holy Grail*, a game I slagged — sorry, criticised — recently in this column for killing you off too illogically and having a pathetic sense of humour. Programming-wise, *Zzzzzz* . . . is streets ahead of that ancient monster, but the plot . . . well, I'm afraid we don't seem to have come very far in the last three years with this one. OK, it's cheap, but then money isn't everything, and life's too short to spend snoring away in front of this little offering.



Atmosphere 25%
Interaction 40%
Lasting Interest 26%
Value for Money 40%
Overall 38%



CLEVER CONTACTS

Come all ye faithful, joyful, and triumphant! This is the page where adventurers all over the world can get together and pass on the valuable experience they have gained on their travels. If you've finished a game (or games — clever clogs) and want to go down in history as one of the Chosen Few, then let me know! Write to the **White Wizard's Dungeon, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**. All details on a postcard please. If you're writing requesting help, then please be aware that I may not always be able to find room for your request on these pages. The best course of action by far is to get in touch with one the adventurers listed below offering help on the game you're stuck on. The White Wizard may be immortal, ingenious, and big-headed, but he's only human and can't answer every letter he receives. If you have a modem, you can contact me on Prestel. My mailbox number is **919994854**. Telecom Gold subscribers can reach me on **83:JNL251**.

Club Help Offered

The Questline Adventure Club is still running strong in Oxford. **Tony Treadwell** — the first man ever to be nominated a demi-Wizard by Ol' Whitey (back in the days of the first ZZAP! issues) — will endeavour to help on all matters magical, vegetable, and mineral. Questline also appears on **Compunet** and **Micronet**, so you can catch them there if you have a modem. For free membership and a newsletter (very informative and packed with tips) send an SAE to: **Questline, 17 Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. Tel (0865) 68637**.

Adventureline, run by **Roger Garret**, is still alive and kicking, despite rumours to the contrary. However, Roger is no longer contactable on the 'phone, so letters only please to **Adventureline, 52 Micawber Way, Chelmsford, Essex, Tel (0245) 442098**. Please note that membership (plus newsletter) costs £1.00.

If there are any other clubs out there in the big, wide world and you wish to enrol the White Wizard's readers through these pages then write in with full details and samples of any newsletters, membership cards, badges, gold bars, etc. to me. Readers will, however, appreciate that I am unwilling to publicise clubs unless I have good evidence that my beloved readers are going to get good value from them, and aren't wasting their stamps and hard-earned guilders in sending off for membership.

Help Offered

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Catacombs, Eureka, Hulk, Spiderman, Munroe Manor, Hobbit, Forest of Doom, Pyramid of Doom, Quest for Merravid, Holy Grail, Twin Kingdom Valley, Dungeon Adventure, Castle of Terror, Golden Baton, Perseus and Andromeda, Witches Cauldron, Classic Adventure, Arrow of Death Part 1, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Aztec Tomb Part 1, Gremlins, Jewels of Babylon
Simon Gaunt, Tel. 0302 726917 between 5pm and 9.30pm only.

Return to Eden, Red Moon, Eureka, Terrormolinos, Bored of the Rings, Doomdark's Revenge, Sherlock, Hampstead, Robin of Sherwood, Urban Upstart, Starcross, Spiderman, Hulk, Hobbit, Mindshadow, Twin Kingdom Valley, Subsunk
Ivan, 54 St Johns Road, Colchester, Essex. Tel Colchester 860597 after 4pm.

Valhalla, Waxworks, Golden Baton, Hulk, Spiderman, Snowball, Arrow of Death Parts 1 and 2, Hobbit, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy, Terrormolinos, Hampstead, Eureka
Nick Wright, 1 Eastleigh Drive, Mickleover, Derby, DE3 5HZ.

Urban Upstart, The Helm, Subsunk, Circus, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, Arrow of Death Part 1, Hulk, Spiderman, Adventureland, Secret Mission, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Gremlins, Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure
Gavin Berry, 25 Beauvale Road, Hucknall, Nottingham, NG15 6PF Tel (0602) 635117 between 2pm and 5pm only.

Red Moon, Lords of Time, Adventure Quest, Fourth Protocol, Lords of Midnight, Hobbit, Twin Kingdom Valley, Gremlins, Hampstead, Tower of Despair, Empire of Karn, Spiderman
Sanjay Keswani, 76 Girdwood Road, London, SW18 5QT Tel 01 788 7511 not later than 9.00pm.

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Gremlins, Hobbit, Terrormolinos
Kevin Murphy, 13 Munro Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 1PX Tel 0592 201384.

Hacker, Dragonsworld, Hampstead, Empire of Karn, Heroes of Karn
Lynn Leech, Tel 0942 606900 after 6pm and Sundays.

Heroes of Karn, Voodoo Castle, Ten Little Indians, The Lost City, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, The Hobbit
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, County Fermanagh, N Ireland.

Zork 1,2,3, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Starcross, Suspended, Planetfall, Hitch-hikers Guide to the Galaxy
Nigel Morse, 11 Green Leafe Avenue, Wheatley Hills, Doncaster, DN2 5RG Tel. Doncaster 61672 between 6pm and 8pm, weekdays only.

Eureka
Andrew Froggatt, 195 White Swan Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland 4, New Zealand.

PLEASE NOTE: Respect your fellow adventurers. Never phone after 10.00pm (earlier if specifically mentioned above) and **ALWAYS** enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you want a reply by post.

THE WHITE WIZARD'S MAILBAG

First, it's time to come clean about the Christmas Top 50 Adventure's chart. Due to a Gremlin in the typesetting machine, most of the entries managed to slip down a line, so the descriptions didn't match the games — often with hilarious results. This was drawn to my notice by **Margaret Austin** of Level 9, who wrote to me saying that she thought the description of *Zork* was the best: **'Quilled story of naughty girls . . .'**.

A consistent note this month has been the steady flow of requests about Roger Garret's Adventureline Club. The 'phone number we used to publish is no longer in operation, so please contact Roger by mail only. **Margaret Griffiths** contacted me on Prestel, saying that, 'I'm afraid people will ring the number you give, and find it's a dead line, and assume that the Club is defunct. But it's very much alive and kicking'. Delighted to hear it, Margaret, and if you're out there Roger, apologies for any confusion caused.

Other Prestel callers (ah, the bliss of modern technology) included **M J Bovill (Mbx 015682977)** who has completed *Hampstead, Castle of Terror, Terrormolinos, Zim Zala Bim*, and *Zork 1*. 'Please mention me in your column as I have written many times before.' Oh, alright then. There's a mention. And it only goes to show how these clever modem things can keep you in touch.

On a different note, I had a letter from **Chris Cobb** of Wellingboro, with the following message to all wizards: 'I'm just about to start a club for sick Infocom Adventurers called the Infocom Adventures Club. I'll be offering a news-letter, hints, tips, maps, info, and hintline for those who are stuck at the moment. I will also, however, need help from others to form the club, so if anybody out there is interested please write to me at: **30 Hatton Avenue, Wellingboro', Northants, NN8 3AP**, enclosing an SAE'. Sounds like a good idea, Chris — have you tried contacting Infocom to ask if they'll help?

Finally, just to let you all know what can happen when you write in to offer help to other adventurers in the Clever Contacts section, here's a brief extract from an epistle from **Mr G Mitchell**, who featured in the column some months ago, but has had to retire: 'Since you first put my name forward I have had numerous phone calls and correspondence to answer and enjoyed every minute. I have received calls and letters from all over Europe and even one letter from Australia. Keep up the good work!'. Well, Mr Mitchell, it's not me who does the good work, it's all you lot out there, so keep writing and let the world know that these pages are yours — and yours alone.

WIZARD TIPS

This month's tips have been very kindly supplied by **Sanjay Keswani**, **Kevin Murphy**, **Nicholas Coles**, and **Giles Williams**.

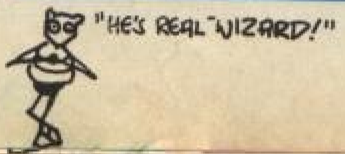
TERRORMOLINOS
What better proof than visiting your hotel? Only swim when properly equipped and in deep enough water. You need three protective items before going to the beach.

ADVENTURE QUEST
Ali Baba would know how to get past the rock slab. Monsters in Orc Towers abhor explosive gems.

TOWER OF DESPAIR
Angels of Death have tender backs. To remain unpetrified, close eyes and crawl.

GRAND LARCENY
Use the stairs if you're not busy — climb too high and you'll get dizzy!

MACBETH 2
The ashes are your key to the cellar. Some heavy spade work will be needed, though.



ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 For

1. *(1)* **PARADROID** (12%)
HEWSON CONSULTANTS, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 97%

2. *(2)* **WINTER GAMES** (11%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 94%

3. *(3)* **SUMMER GAMES II** (11%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 97%

4. *(23)* **COMMANDO** (5%)
ELITE £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 77%

5. *(9)* **PET PEOPLE** (4%)
ACTIVISION, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 97%

6. *(4)* **ELITE** (4%)
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 92%

7. *(8)* **WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST** (4%)
MELBOURNE HOUSE, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 93%

8. *(5)* **FIGHT NIGHT** (3%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk
ZZAP! rating 93%

9. *(10)* **PITSTOP II** (3%)
US GOLD, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

10. *(7)* **WHO DARES WINS II** (2%)
ALLIGATA, £7.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

11. *(26)* **RAMBO**
OCEAN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 65%

12. *(—)* **BALLBLAZER**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 98%

13. *(—)* **KIK START**
MASTERTRONIC, £1.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

14. *(11)* **DROPZONE**
UK GOLD, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

15. *(6)* **FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD**
OCEAN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 97%

16. *(16)* **MONTY ON THE RUN**
GREMLIN GRAPHICS, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

17. *(17)* **NODES OF YESOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

18. *(18)* **Z**
RINO, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 88%

19. *(—)* **KORONIS RIFT**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

20. *(—)* **MERCENARY**
NOVAGEN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 98%

YOU COULD WIN SOFTWARE BY VOTING FOR THE ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 CHART!

Every month we give away an amazing **£40 worth of software** to the first person whose ZZAP! READERS TOP 30 VOTING FORM is pulled from the bag. The winner also receives a super ZZAP! 64 T-shirt. Four runners up get a T-shirt and a ZZAP! Cap. So all you have to do is fill out the form below, remembering to put your name and address down, list your five favourite games in descending order (remember they must be released games that you have played), state which software you would like (to a total value of £40) should you win, and your T-shirt size (S,M,L). Then send your form in to the address shown.

ZZAP! 64 TOP 30 VOTING COUPON

(Please write in block capitals)

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

If I win the £40 worth of software, the games I would like are:
Game (and software house)

My T-shirt size is S/M/L

I am voting for the following five games:

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

4 ....

5 ....

ZZAP! TOP 30, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

r MARCH 1986

21. *(20)* **SCARABAEUS**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 96%

22. *(21)* **HYPERSPORTS**
IMAGINE, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

23. *(25)* **FOURTH PROTOCOL**
HUTCHINSON, £12.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 95%

24. *(12)* **SKYFOX**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

25. *(14)* **BARRY MCGUIGAN'S BOXING**
ACTIVISION, £9.99 cass
ZZAP! rating 91%

26. *(13)* **ROBIN OF THE WOOD**
ODIN, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 92%

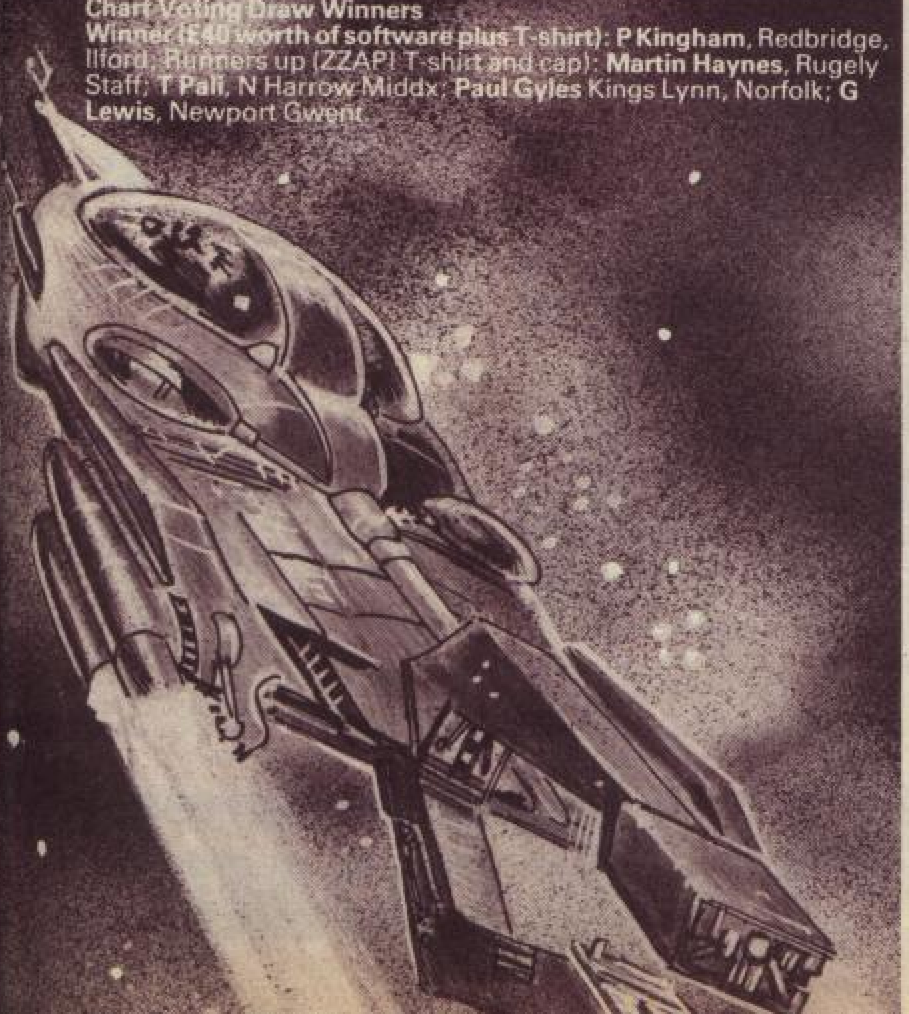
27. *(24)* **KARATEKA**
ARIOLASOFT, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 80%

28. *(—)* **REVS**
FIREBIRD, £14.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 96%

29. *(19)* **BEACH HEAD II**
US GOLD, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 90%

30. *(28)* **FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING**
ELITE, £9.95 cass
ZZAP! rating 69%

Chart Voting Draw Winners
Winner (£40 worth of software plus T-shirt): **P Kingham**, Redbridge, Ilford; **Runners up (ZZAP! T-shirt and cap)**: **Martin Haynes**, Rugely Staff; **T Pali**, N Harrow Middx; **Paul Gyles** Kings Lynn, Norfolk; **G Lewis**, Newport Gwent



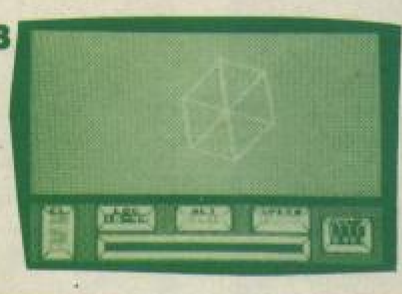
BIT OF A MERCENARY ARE YOU THEN JOHN?

Rate your chances on winning a Commodore 128 in this Novagen comp, Eh?

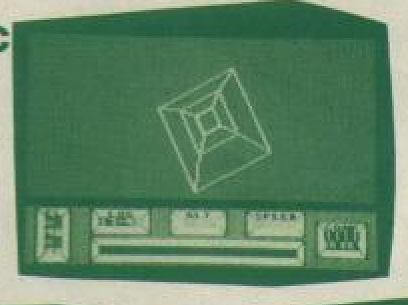
A



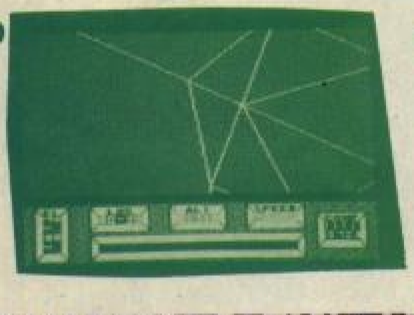
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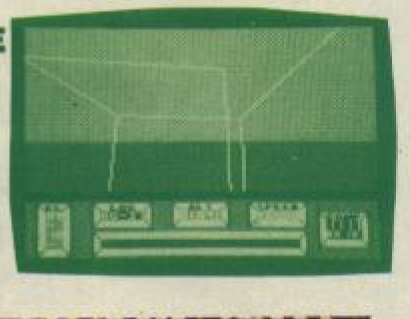
C



D



E



F



G



NAME THAT DOOBRIE ENTRY FORM

I've worked out what the seven objects are, 'cos I'm a real smart *Mercenary* player, so I've listed their names below:

A ....

B ....

C ....

D ....

E ....

F ....

G ....

My Name ....

My Address ....

....

..............**POST CODE** ....

T SHIRT SIZE (S,M,L) ....

Play NAME THAT DOOBRIE and win, win, win!

Only once before in the annals of ZZAP! history has a game been awarded 98% Overall. Which goes to show that *Mercenary*, which weighs in as this month's Gold Medal Game with a stunning 98%, is a very high class game indeed.

There's a robot at Novagen HQ — Benson's friend, Hedges — and he reckoned it was time to set you *Mercenary* players a little challenge. He sent an Inter-Minion telex which read:

Ardent players of Mercenary **will know there's a host of objects deployed around the planet — and will be able to recognise most of them. Telefaxing seven pictures. Suggest readers invited identify objects — winner gets 128 Commodore; 50 T Shirts available for runners up. ENDMESSAGE**

So there you go. Hedges has got his mate Benson to produce displays of some of the objects found in the game. Seven of the more familiar objects that are named in the program are pictured here — but they have been put in an unfamiliar setting. They've been set floating above the planet's surface to create a view from a new angle, and you'll have to do a bit of puzzling to identify them.

The pictures have been marked A to G, and you need to name them all. Use the entry form on this page to play Name That Doobrie, fill in your name and address — not forgetting your T-shirt size (Small, Medium or Large) — and whizz your entry to ZZAP! MERCENARY, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 13th March.

Good Spotting. ENDCOMP

ZZAP! COMP

OUT FOR THE COUNT

Ever heard of a software company producing games for the Commodore 64 in Sweden? Well, neither had we until we got a tip off about a strange company called **GREVE GRAPHICS** *based in the southern Swedish town of Lund. Our reporter is Swedish ZZAP! reader* **MIKAEL HARD**, *who lives in Stockholm.*



Bengt 'the dog' Caroli in an unusually modest mood.

I had never heard of this games software company so I decided to find out more about it. First of all, Greve Graphics had been existing for approximately six months (and this represented all the information I could find without actually talking to them). Obviously the only way to get material for this article was by phoning someone at Greve Graphics.

I managed to get their phone number, but was unable to get in contact with any personnel. Then it occurred to me that as they are in the programming business they might be reachable during the evening. Correct. 10.38 same night, a fellow called Bengt 'the dog' Caroli answered. I asked him if it was possible to make an interview at Greve Graphics the very next morning. The reply was positive, and I got a short description of how to find what he called the Greve Graphics Software Centre building.



Advanced Swedish programming techniques are being used in designing SOLDIER ONE.

Next morning: Lund isn't a very big Swedish town, but despite this I fail to find the building with the fancy name. After spending the afternoon on the telephone, I finally get a more detailed description. This time I am told that it is really quite a small building, but when the house appears I get a shock. 'It must be a joke,' is my first reaction. Can a group of people possibly work in there?

I knock at the door and wait. After some seconds it swings up and there appears a somewhat original gestalt. I tell this person that I am there to interview someone at Greve Graphics called Bengt Caroli.

'Yes, it's me you are looking for, I'm the boss here at Greve Graphics,' he replies. I might be a bit old fashioned, but could this man be 'the dog' boss of a software company? He shows me inside the Software Centre building, and I must say, it is an experience to remember — especially the Kitchen. I will not discuss this further, but I could say it represented shock number two.

My first question to Mr Caroli concerns the name, Greve Graphics.

Mr Caroli thinks for a long period then he says, 'Hmmm. Okay then, my friends at the Computer Science Department used to make joke about that I looked like a modern count, and the word 'count' translated into Swedish is 'Greve'. I think it's a well suited name, because a count prefers quality products, and that's our business. The word graphics has also got a special meaning. Delicious graphics make one third of a game, poor graphics are common, but not in our products.'

'Why did you start a new company, and in Sweden?' I ask Mr Caroli.

'I said to myself, if no one else could produce a game that entertained me, I had to do it myself. And now when the *Soldier One* game is nearly complete I want to share it with all C64 users. In very near future we will try to establish connections with English software companies to market *Soldier One* in the UK; so there is no problem with our geographical location,' replies Mr Caroli, very self-confident.

My next question concerns how many programmers etc, there are working at Greve Graphics.

'At the moment we are two programmers writing code for *Soldier One*. In making this game we also use musicians and graphic designers to complete it. One person can't do all these different types of work all alone, so why not use people who are trained in other artforms? It can't be denied that most of us working here have a proper computer science education, and that makes the working environment good.'

A good game — how should it be?' I ask next.

'The most important thing is naturally the feeling of the game. I've seen beautiful games, with wonderful music and graphics appearing on the screen. After two seconds of playing I know if the game has feeling, if not I just scream, and then my trash-can waits. A successful game is a combination of a lot of factors. Take for example, if you play a game and there is one boring scene that stops you for minutes, do you play that game every day? In my case I play it a couple of times, then it's thrown in the trash-can.

'I take another example to make it clear what I mean. A game with multiple functions, can be fun, but when I want recreation in front of my computer I don't want to pick up a manual just to play it. It should be obvious how to play it without a handbook! One rule is, enough functions to add real feeling, not more.

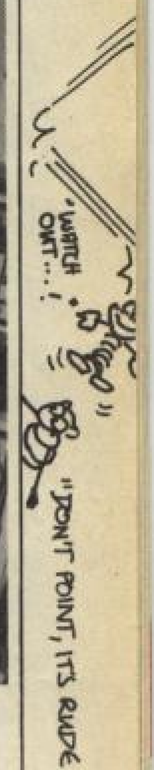


The Greve Graphics Software Centre building. Bengt only a Llama or two short of being Mintersohn.

'A good game has to be loaded with action, not like those boring puzzles. I like to steer powerful guns and cannon, shooting at everything moving on the screen. Sound and graphics should be first class. And if there is some original music, it scores high in my



Seated on his aged PET 2001, Mr Caroli holds forth on the merits of computer games.

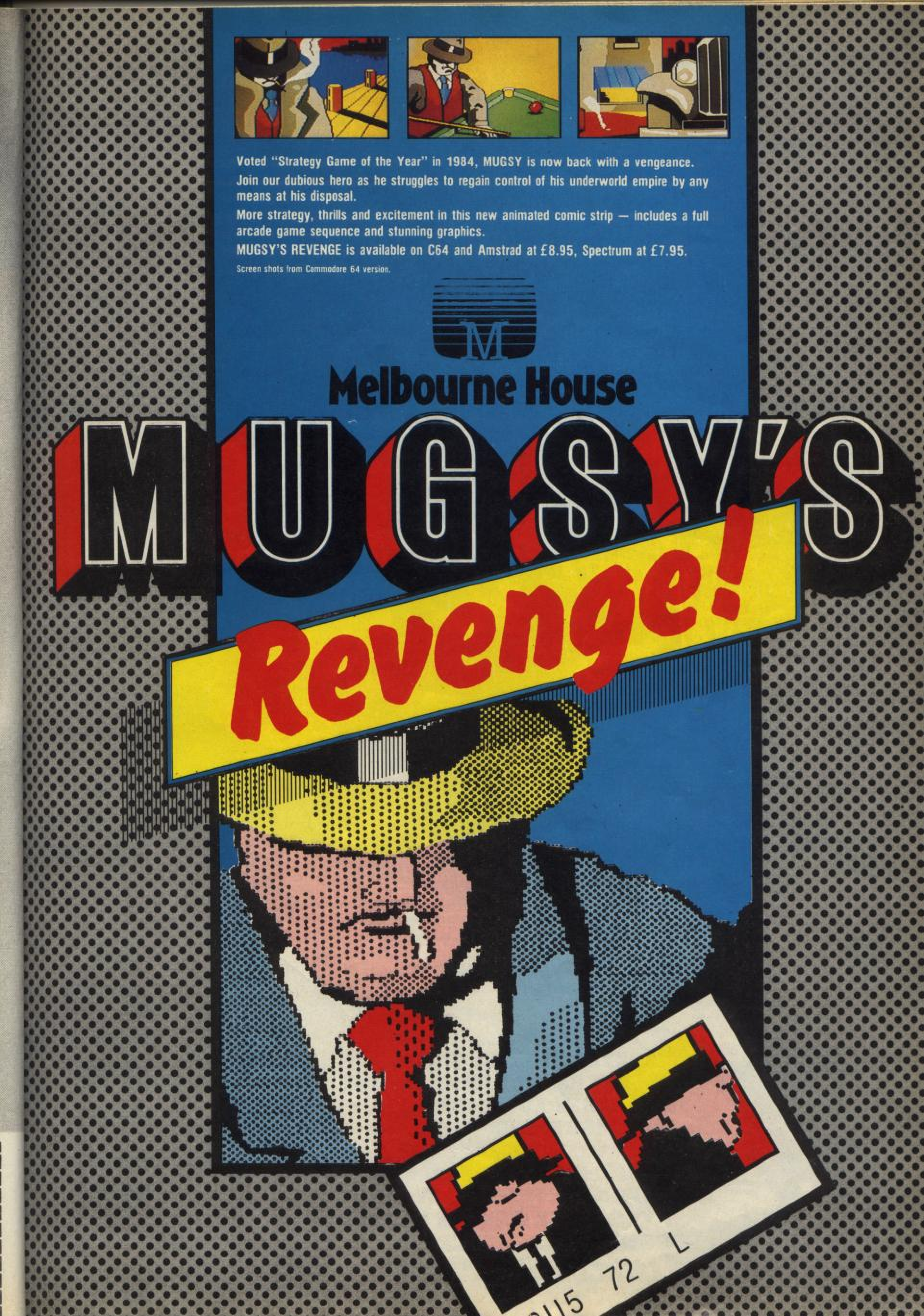


opinion. I'm tired of those who steal musical scores (in lack of fantasy) to transform them into a computer version for a game!'

At this point I stop Mr Caroli in order to get in my last question — 'How did you start computing?'

'It all started when I bought an old PET 2001. The first game I ever wrote was a version of Space Invaders. At that time I didn't think that 6502 assembly language was as easy as speaking natural language ('I do have that opinion now,' he commented). Today my PET is a bit aged, but I still use it to develop the most advanced routines — or as a chair!' The last being said with Mr Caroli's very annoying laugh.

I thank Bengt 'the dog' Caroli for this interesting interview, and wish him all the best in computing.


Voted "Strategy Game of the Year" in 1984, MUGSY is now back with a vengeance.
Join our dubious hero as he struggles to regain control of his underworld empire by any means at his disposal.
More strategy, thrills and excitement in this new animated comic strip — includes a full arcade game sequence and stunning graphics.
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Screen shots from Commodore 64 version.
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"KEERRR !!! * ... REQUEST ... ARTILLERY BACK UP IMMEDIATELY ... ENEMY TANKS ADVANCING ... ** REINFORCEMENTS REQUIRED ... KEEERRR!! ** ... MOVEMENT HERE RESTRICTED ... AIRPOWER NEEDED ... * ... WEATHER CONDITIONS ... ABYSMAL ... *** ... WE'RE GOING IN !!! ... ** ... OVER ! ..."
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WINNERS • WINNERS • WINNERS • WINNERS •

We apologise to winners of the Argus Competition of Rupert and the Toymaker's Party, the results of which were printed in ZZAP! issue 8 (December). Owing to a computer cock-up, the names and postcodes came out of the computer, but the full addresses did not. Would all winners please let us know who they are and where they live as soon as possible!

LEISURE GENIUS COMPETITION

Here we go with another load of ZZAP! Comps winners, most of the comps from the Christmas Special in fact. We kick off with the lucky winners of the Leisure Genius SCALEXTRIC competition. The five winners each receive Formula 1 Scalextric sets, with a further 25 runners up getting copies of the game.

5 WINNERS
Steve Cooper, Somerset BA16 OLE; Jonathan Hulme, Reading RG4 8UR; Steve Knowles, Cambs PE17 2RZ; Anthony Ridding, Northants NN13 6EL; Paul Wynn, Kent CT19 5LP.

25 RUNNERS UP
Richard Alexander, Aberdeen AB2 0AX; RC Allan, Surrey, GU21 4QX; Anonymous, Bucks SL9 8NY; PR Bocock, Notts NG29 2DQ; Chris Branford, Herts WD3 2NH; David Cameron, Essex CM4 9NN; Paul Campbell, Northern Ireland BT20 3EP; Russell Caston, Kent DA15 9JJ; Tony Chappell, Kent BR5 1LD; William Church, Cornwall PL14 6EH; Michael Davies, Edinburgh EH16 5BD; Alex Dennett, Hants RG26 6PB; WJ Dowdle, Co Durham DL15 0PY; Neil Grant, Redditch B97 5NY; Philip Hall, Hull HU4 6TT; John Hirst, Lancashire L39 8SQ; James Johnston, Kent TN15 6LL; Sean O'Kane, Northern Ireland BT48 7RY; Mrs E Orchard, Dorset; Stephen Patterson, Middx HA5 1TZ; Joti Plahay, Berkshire SL6 7HB; Carleton Shaw, London N10 3HT; Richard Walden, Coventry CV7 9GD; Richard Wills, Suffolk NR33 0RU; Mark Woolrich, Doncaster DN1 2NS;

HEWSON COMPETITION

Hewson asked you to fit the bits of programmers Steve Turner and Andrew Braybrook to the correct faces to win a Christmas pack of four games and a Gribbly mug. 30 winners were required and these following 30 got it right and got drawn first!

Simon Ambridge, Suffolk IP17 3AD; John Archer, Derbyshire DE6 1PH; TN Branston, Notts NG12 3AS; Paul Campbell, Northern Ireland BT20 3EP; Stephen Cathcart, Surrey GU9 9AN; Peter Corbett, Belfast, BT5 6PJ; Paul A Corner, W Sussex PO19 3QD; Chris Dickson, Surrey KT19 8SW; Shaun Ellis, Notts DN22 0LG; Conn Mac Evilly, Republic Of Ireland; Thomas Galliford, Kent TN2 3RX; Martin Gibbins, Derbyshire DE6 4AD; R McGuiness, Cardiff CF2 1NH; Philip Hall, Hull HU4 6TT; Jason Hagan, Birmingham B36 0UA; David Hatch, Beds SG19 2RU; Mitchell Haines, W Midlands B73 6BH; Chris Hempsey, Sheffield S5 9NN; Jimmy Hughes, London SW8 1PL; Gavin Johnson, Northumberland NE63 9SX; Mark Judd, Norfolk, PE34 4, ; G Kanis, Surrey GU22 7HN; David Lawrence, Surrey CR3 1ON; Colm Mulholland, London W4 1BD; Lee Neary, Westlothian EH49 6LH; Steve Pallett, Birmingham B37 6NG; NJ porter, Worcester WR5 1JJ; Anthony Quansah, W Yorks WF2 0AA; Simon Strachan, W Yorks BD11 1EZ; Andrew Willet, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 2UU

FRIDAY 13TH COMP (Nasty Thing to Do to Liddon)

Domark were offering two nights at the Post House Hotel, Newcastle, Staffordshire for two and trip to Alton Towers fun park for the outright winner, being the person who could think up the nastiest thing to do to Gary Liddon. Naturally we allowed Gary to pick the winner, it seemed only fair. His choice gave him great amusement, although the saner elements in the office couldn't quite see why . . .

The winner, then, is **J Leach** from Orpington BR5 1RD, with the sage advice — 'to put his head in a liquidiser, stamp on the remains of his body and feed his head to a dog named Rover'. It seemed to be the bit about Rover that got to Liddon — there's no accounting for taste . .

MELBOURNE HOUSE BIG DADDY COMP

Paula Byrne (is wonderful) got to grips with top wrestler Big Daddy in honour of the game Rock 'n Wrestle. She wanted you to devise a caption for the photo, with the outright winner getting the complete works of Melbourne House, and 50 runners-up each get a copy of Big Daddy's Rock 'N Wrestle game. The winner was **Chris Gair** Essex CM18 7QQ. The runners up were:

Michael Bailey, TYNE & WEAR NE25 0AA; James Batty, W MIDS DY8 1ND; Neil Belfitt, NOTTS S80 4JT; Paul Betts, LONDON SW1 0HT; David Bollenderg, PRESTON PR1 9TQ; Mark Botham, STOCKPORT SK6 1HZ; Giles Broomfield, SURREY GU18 5UR; Paul Brown, BERKS RG1 4UT; Jason Burgwin, STAFFS WS3 3DA; Daniel Curtis, LONDON N4 3RA; Marc Davies, GWENT NP1 8DL; Steven Doyle, Gwent SQ12 6RB; S Farthing, ESSEX CO12 4HD; George Fox, Clydebank G81 3JQ; Andrew Fraser, STAFFS ST14 8DH; Neil Frazer, TYNE & WEAR SR3 3LE; Danny Gray, LONDON E8 3AY; Anthony Greaves, LONDON W7 3DA; Simon Heraty, WOLVERHAMPTON WV10 8EH; Paul Humphries, KENT MW10 4UW; Matthew Jones, GWYNEDD LL53 8NU; Michael Kemp, CORNWALL TR1 3NB; Stuart Knights, BUCKS HP0 1TR; KM Law, HERTS SG8 6BW; M Linklater, CLEVELAND TG25 3AB; Robert Macintyre, CHESHIRE SK8 3AT; Kevin Murphy, FIFE KY1 1PX; Edward Narmer, S DEVON TQ9 6JT; Linus O'Brian, LONDON SW11; A Oystoiv, LANCASTER LA1 1LA; Nigel Parnaby, TYNE & WEAR NE34 0EL; Arun Patel, W MIDS DY2 8XR; Roy Peters, LONDON E5 9PL; Richard Pinner, TYNE & WEAR NE38 8RE; Pier Pistocchi, W SUSSEX RH16 3AL; Mark Robertson, Nr NEWMARK NG3 5DY; Adam Rogers, BRISTOL BS17 6BA; Karnjit Sandhu, ESSEX RM17 6JZ; Paul Saunders, BIRMINGHAM B30 2BA; Mark Saunders, KENT BR8 7TX; Jeff Setzer, CUMBRIA CA8 1TT; A Stead, Nr WORCS WR6 6EF; John Tomlinson, N Humberside DN4 6JX; J Wankling, BIRMINGHAM B31 2RQ; Andrew West, DEVON EX8 3HR; John Westmacott, WORCESTER WR5 1QR; Darren White, TYNE & WEAR NE8 4PY; Paul Wickes, HANTS GU13 8ES; Zoran Duvnjak, LONDON W13 7LR.

ACTIVISION PET PERSON COMP

What's behind the three doors of your avergae Little Computer person's home? That's what we wanted to know. Outright winner gets a 1541 Disk Drive and a LCP Kit, and 59 runners-up get LCPDKs all of their own. The winner was **Graham Simpson** of Bexley Heath, KENT DA7 6DB. The 59 runners-up are:

D Abbott, NOTTS NG17 8DZ; Paul Abrahams, LONDON E4 9BB; RC Allen, SURREY GU21 4QX; Mark Ashworth, W SUSSEX GU29 0LA; Jon Bains, Fife KY7 4SA; Stuart Bate, Co Durham SR8 5LQ; Mark Beedles, MERSEYSIDE L62 0BP; Andrew Bullock, Aylesbury, BUCKS; Mrs WC Campion, ESSEX CM1 5EH; Russel Caston, KENT DA15 9JJ; Peter Douglas Clayton, W YORKS HD3 4RE; Nicholas Coles, HANTS SO24 9RH; Peter Connelly, Mid Lothien EH20 9DE; Nicholas Davies, CHESHIRE SK14 8BN; Harvey Deacon, ESSEX CO6 1QB; James Dimmock, Peterborough PE6 8BD; A Dua, MIDDX UB5 4SE; RJ East, OXFORD OX3 8QS; Glyn Evans, MORAYSHIRE; BD Everingham, ESSEX RM3 9XB; Toby Flight, HERTS WD3 2N8; Andrew Freyer, LEEDS LS17 6SH; Patrick Goff, NORFOLK NR2 2AD; Paul Gordon, N IRELAND BT63 5JN; Martin Haines, CORNWALL EX23 0NA; Philip Hall, HULL HU4 6TT; Jason Hall, ESSEX IG8 0TL; David Hally, SCOTLAND PH11 8AW; Harvey Hanson, W YORK HX3 8QG; James Hawnt, CLWYD LL12 8US; Rick Jones, KENT CT16 2HP; Ian Kelly, WIGAN WN4 8AL; Stanley Kowalski, Warwickshire CV10 8BY; Melanie Lake, W SUSSEX BN15 0LA; Mark Lawrence, W SUSSEX RH14 9RE; Angus Lee, Aberdeen AB2 4UB; Nicholas Lemin, MIDDX TW1 2BX; M Linklater, Cleveland TS25 3AB; Warren Marshall, LONDON E11 2NT; Gary Milligan, S Clyde ML8 5SB; Mike Munn, LONDON E11; K Murphy, Fife KY1 1DX; Matthew Owen, CHESHIRE WA52TN; I Peirse, KENT DA5 3BX; Ricky Pettison, NOTTS DN22 6ND; Lee Price, Nuneaton WARWICKSHIRE; Robert Pugh, KENT ME15 8TN; Johnathon Reeves, LANCS WN5 7PP; Gary Robinson, BERKS SL2 1QB; Mark Saunders, KENT BR8 7TX; Mark Simson, Elgin IV30 3RT; MA Tate, Royal Hussars BFPO 15; Simon Train, GLASGOW G13 4HL; Paul Underhay, Crowthorne, BERKSHIRE; Jason Walker, HANTS RG24 0AB; Stuart Watts, WILTS SN3 4JB; Andrew West, DEVON EX8 3HR; Emlyn Williams, ESSEX SS9 2HJ; Jonathan Wilson, MERSEYSIDE WA12 8QA; Mark Woolrich, DONCASTER DN1 2NS

We'll be drawing the winners for the CRL Space Doubt Comnpetition and the Bubble Bus Competition next month.

How to enter your challenge

1. State games and scores clearly on the form provided (or a close copy). You can give fewer than four games if you wish.
2. State level achieved at the end of each game, either the wave number (if possible), rating or some indication of how far you went into the game along with the time taken to complete the game.
3. In the space provided write further details about the game which might help to confirm your score. If it's an arcade adventure then write the percentage and if it has a time limit or bonus then state how long was left and what bonus was awarded. Other details include things like the game crashing because of the high-score achieved or whether the game resets at a certain point. Any other relevant details will be useful.
5. Post your entry to: Zzap Challenge, Zzap! 64, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB

Yes, I'm ready to challenge the Zzap champion on the following games.

Game.............................. Score.................. Level reached.................. Time taken..................
Other details..

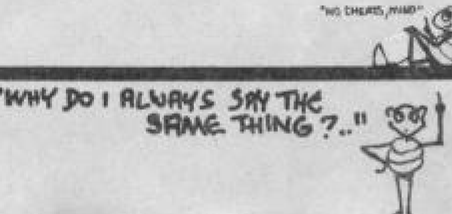
Game.............................. Score.................. Level reached.................. Time taken..................
Other details..

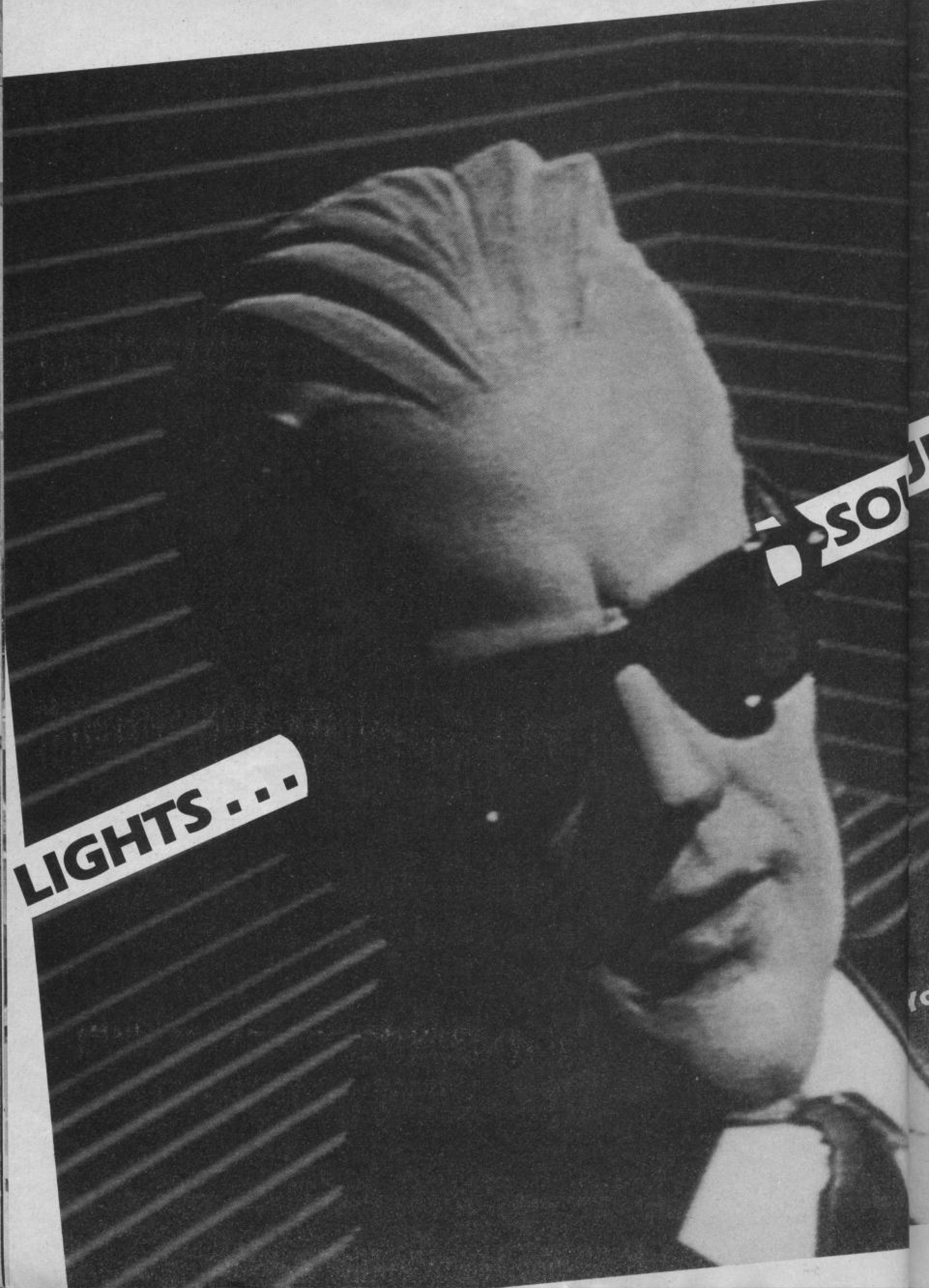
Game.............................. Score.................. Level reached.................. Time taken..................
Other details..

Game.............................. Score.................. Level reached.................. Time taken..................
Other details..

Did you exploit any cheats, bugs or special techniques (inc. auto rapid fire) to obtain any of these scores? (Yes/no) ... (If 'Yes', give full details on a separate piece of paper.)

I promise these scores are genuine. Signed ....
Name..............................
Address..
Post code..............................
Telephone number (if poss)..............................




LIGHTS . . .
SOU

...UND....CAMERA....ACTION!



Good wheeze, huh? Replacing a real live human being (needs: warm room, canteen, salary) with a computer generated personality (needs: a computer to live in, some electricity and NO salary, canteen, broom cupboard rest room etc, etc).

Every time this 'umble Competition Minion wanders through a multi-storey car park nowadays he watches the barrier **very** carefully. You can never be sure what the Big Cheese MD of Newsfield, Oli Frey, might come up with next. Like replacing yours truly with one of those Tonto QL-and-Telephone-Answering-Machine doobries.

Somehow, I don't think a Comp-Comp-Competition Minion ought to be anything like a cult figure. I mean, cults come and cults go, don't you know.

It's not that I like living in the broom cupboard, it's just that I'm so used to stick and need a bit of polish now and again! (Joke.)

GERRON WITH IT! —ED

As Gary Liddon would say, I was just walking down to the local TV station to make my weekly megastar appearance, when who should I bump into but Max Headroom? 'Time you did a competition in ZZAP!, John', he said, dropping his perfectly formed nut squarely in the middle of my cranium.

'See You Max', I replied, in my best Glasgow accent, 'No problem Jimmy'

I'M WARNING YOU!

Half a dozen Max Headroom Goodiebags are on offer in this comp ordered by Max and sponsored by Quicksilva, who are bringing out the computer game, MAX HEADROOM. Each one contains a copy of the game for the C64, a T Shirt, a copy of the book MAX HEADROOM'S GUIDE TO LIFE and a Video of the film, TWENTY MINUTES INTO THE FUTURE. Top prize winner will also collect that 14" colour portable telly. Not bad eh?

To enter the competition, and thus stand a chance of winning, you'll need to stretch those old creative muscles and contribute to the Max Headroom fund with some ideas/graphics of your own. You might like to follow the example set a couple of ZZAP!'s ago, and put Max onto the screen of your Commodore and send us the tape or disk you used to do it. You could have a go at solving the ultimate mystery: we've all seen Max's head, but what does the rest of him look like? Send us your painting, drawing or anatomical analysis. Alternatively, you could try and fill in the gaps in Max's life history — not with a complete biography, but with a few salient points in his career. Maybe an entry for WHO'S WHO for Max would do.

So you doodle away on your Commodore, push a biro across some paper or get out the old artist's materials. Even make a video if Daddikins happens to own a network TV station. Whatever you do, however, be creative and get going right now. You've got until 13th March to amaze the judging team. Get your efforts in to MAX HEADROOM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. Don't forget to let us know what size T-Shirt you'd like if you are a lucky winner.

ABOUT TIME TOO!

ZZAP! COMP



CAN THE TEA BOY MAKE GOOD?

Ah a day back in the arena of the challenge at long last. Though I cannot deny having enjoyed the last few months relaxing on a radiation bed, sipping the odd Vim and tonic, it's nice to get back to the thrill of the challenge to see the blood of some poor fool's ego spilled. After the desecration of Evil Penn, the ZZAP! team scoured their ranks for a new player to meet the might of a scorelord champion. Scour they did and all they could come up with was Gary Liddon, formerly Junior Refreshment Technician of software com pany Domark. This being was a bit of an unknown quantity so I decided to do a spot of research on his game playing. What I discovered pleased me a great deal indeed, the poor lad's playing experience virtually totalled nil. Scanning my own score tables the only entries I could see from this amoeba was a dilapidated score on Alligata's *Z* and a feeble entry on CRL's *Bladerunner*. Since a challenge at *Bladerunner* is too ghastly even for my synaptically enhanced nastiness cells to handle, it seemed that the only option was a challenge at Chris Butler's classic *Z* to give the slothful subservant a fighting chance.

The only entry of any note among my annals of achievement was that of **Kevin Fairbrother**, a hero of the best sort with a score of 209,000. Using the Biomorphic Regenerator (BR) I summoned Kevin almost instantaneously through that dimension known only as Railspace. The plan was to play three games, each game completed by killing Fatty the Aggressor that comes to conquer on level four. The player to win two of the three games would be champion. I had no qualms about my hero's skills and his ability to win.

When arriving at the dilapidated ZZAP! offices I became aware that though Liddon is a creature of very little brain, some ancient instinct had spurred him on to practise till he was able to reach 211,000; a true victory of nature over nurture. I found it extremely hard to believe but there was a definite smirk of self confidence clumsily plastered across his wobbling jowls. Smirk now mortal, repent at leisure.

Without any perfunctory meddlings I commanded the challenge to start immediately, pausing only slightly to glare at the vanquished Penn and Rignall. They cowered and I laughed. The proceedings began.

Game One

Settling his shanks onto the inadequate chair, Liddon brought up a flabby and atrophied hand to his joystick and dared once more to smile. Even though this was purely a simple gesture of mere instinct (Liddons are not truly sentient creatures such as you and I) it annoyed me furiously and it was only utmost restraint that saved him from a blast of absolute zero Domestos.

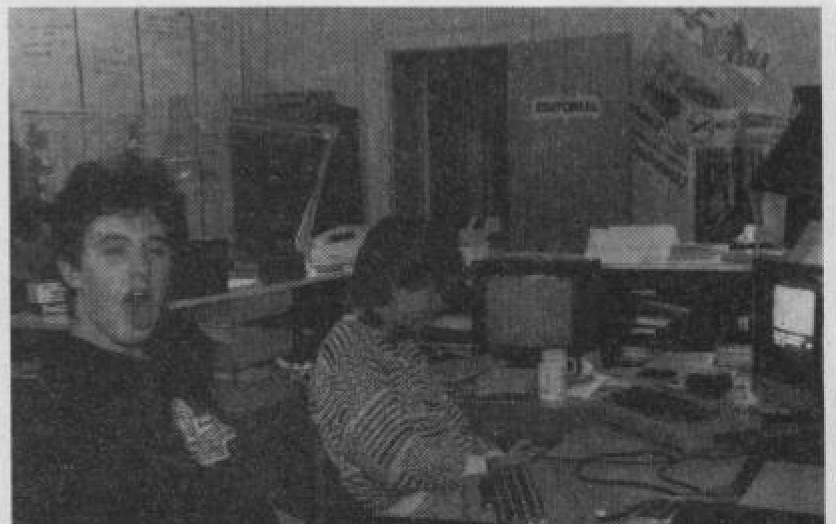
With a release of awe inspiring ethereal light I signalled for the game to begin. Instantly, showing his considerable arcade training, my champion went straight into the game with a barely perceptable pause. Liddon, however, seemed ignorant of the fact that the game hard started and it took several seconds of severe poking in the ribs from Mr Penn before he managed to drag a lethargic digit onto the fire button.

My face ached as its muscles went through the motions of a smile, an exercise it has not experienced in long time. Kevin's strategy was simple and straightforward. He collected energy bombs from the holders until he had enough to blast a sizable enough hole for his ship to fly through. Liddon, however, well and truly amazed me by his minimalist approach to the whole problem. Collecting only one energy bomb, the mindless ectoplasm bubble had developed a method flying through the gap created by this hole. Surely this masterly idea could not have evolved from one so unevolved? The only logical conclusion to draw was that a freak shower of cosmic rays had saturated the imbecile's head and agitated the small number of neurons he possesses into an idea.

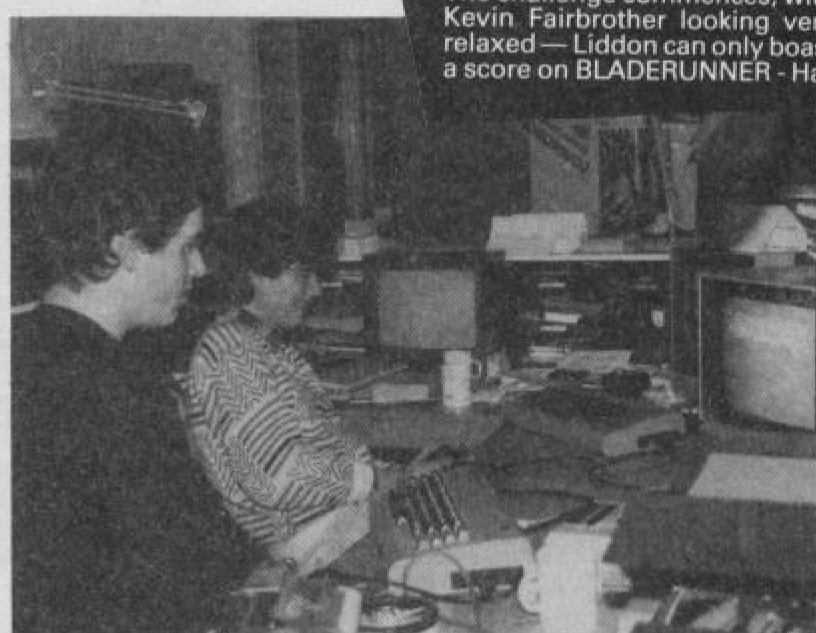
f all the bad luck, stumbling backwards in despair I tried desperately to calm myself by injecting an emergency dose of molten oven pads. I prayed to the great god Lever for some sort of much needed help. Looking back to the screen the spiteful Liddon was already onto the third screen leaving my champion far behind, yet to progress from the first screen.

Ah, finally Kevin made it onto the second screen having collected and used three energy bombs, but quickly scanning back to Liddon my eyes were greeted by a grin containing a stupidity preciously unatainted by any living creature. He had got onto, and was battling it out, on the fourth screen already. By now my champion had scraped his way onto level three but was still using his inferior method of blasting away a large hole before warpjumping to another screen.

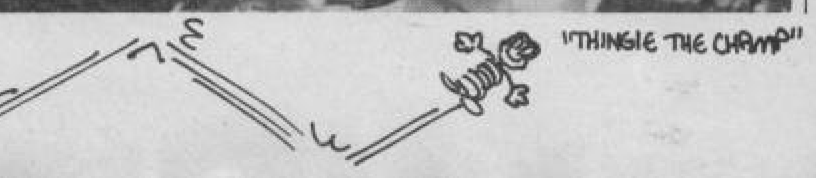
Liddon was now in possession of six energy bombs and was waiting for the Fatty Aggressor to appear. To destroy the final nasty, five bombs need to be unleashed in the vicinity of Fatty. Fatty appeared and a simple babylike gurgle of delight issued from Mr Liddon. I sighed and then he cried. His reptile like reflexes had failed totally and Fatty whizzed over the ship killing Mr Liddon. With two lives left the same thing happened again and to my unbelievable pleasure, yet again. By this time Kevin had got onto the final

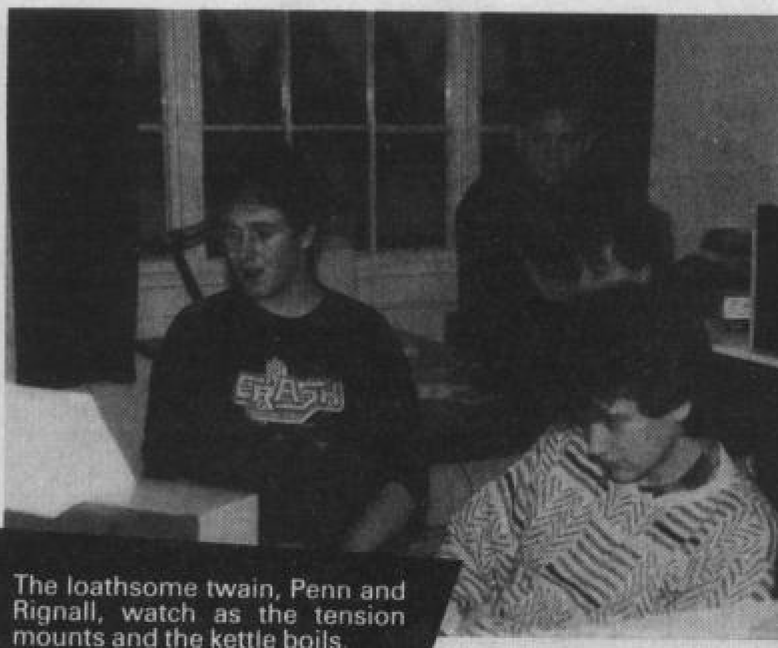


I found it extremely hard to believe but there was a definite smirk of self confidence clumsily plastered across his wobbling jowls.



The challenge commences, with Kevin Fairbrother looking very relaxed — Liddon can only boast a score on BLADERUNNER - Ha!





The loathsome twain, Penn and Rignall, watch as the tension mounts and the kettle boils.

screen and was happily collecting bombs for the final conflict. I was so happy. True, Liddon could win if he could claw his way to the final barrier once more and manage to kill Fatty before Kevin did but that would be near impossible to achieve. My champion was having difficulty in collecting energy bombs and fool that Liddon is, he had decided to attempt at starting another game and catch up with my champion.

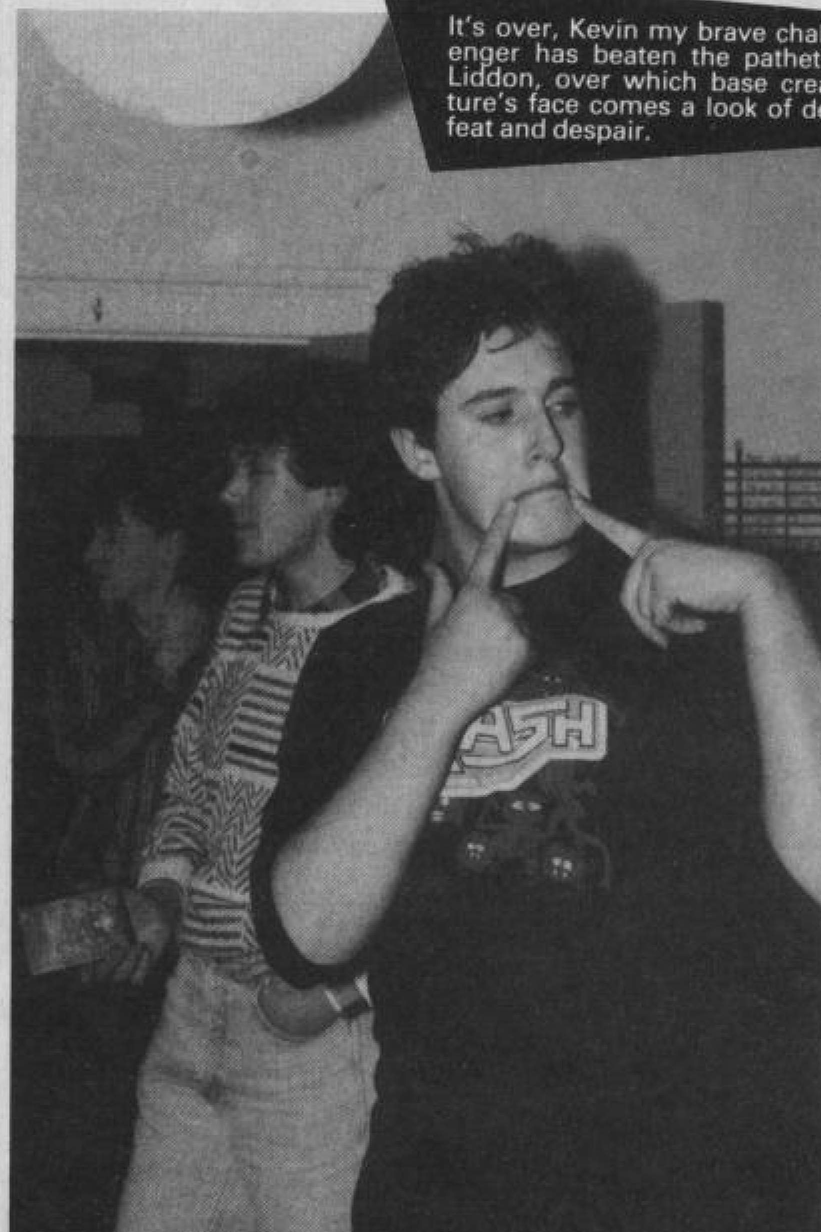
Worry crept across my being, Liddon was progressing awfully fast and Kevin wasn't. After some exceedingly lucky breaks on the spineless one's part he managed to get back to the fourth screen while my champion was in possession of only 3 bombs. To this day I swear that *Z* must have had some sort of affection for that retarded invertebrate, for with some incredible flukes Liddon the missing link managed to collect five bombs, leaving my champion behind with only four. NO THIS CAN NOT HAPPEN!

Desperate situations demand desperate measures. Leaning across the challenge table I whispered the word 'Teacosy' into his ear just as Fatty appeared. The word permeated his jelly like mind and duly reminded him of his Domark days. Obviously this badly affected his chances with Fatty and though five energy bombs were despatched by his ship only four hit true. Fatty trounced all over him and sent the lower order sublife back to collecting bombs. My champion in the meantime killed his own opponent and was now waiting to play another game. I laughed, Rignall and Penn cowered and Liddon ate a packet of crisps.

Game Two

Though I know lower organisms such as Liddon are truly devoid of any kind of sentient traits, but when the second game started I'm sure I could detect some sort of determination from him. No, it must have been some sort of fault within my own detection circuits but he did seem to be doing awfully well suddenly. Without any loss of life and in a very short time he reached the final stage. His two colleagues must have noticed my previous ploy as there was now some cotton wool jammed into his ears. Normally this sort of protectionary measure would not have slowed me down a jot, usually a telepathic blast would be enough to ruin such a being's concentration. Liddon though has no mind at all and is immune to any kind of psychic interference. With a sorrow that could destroy worlds, I watched Liddon destroy Porky leaving Kevin with three bombs and only about to get onto level four. The next game is vital.

Who will win?



It's over, Kevin my brave challenger has beaten the pathetic Liddon, over which base creature's face comes a look of defeat and despair.

"HOPELESS!"

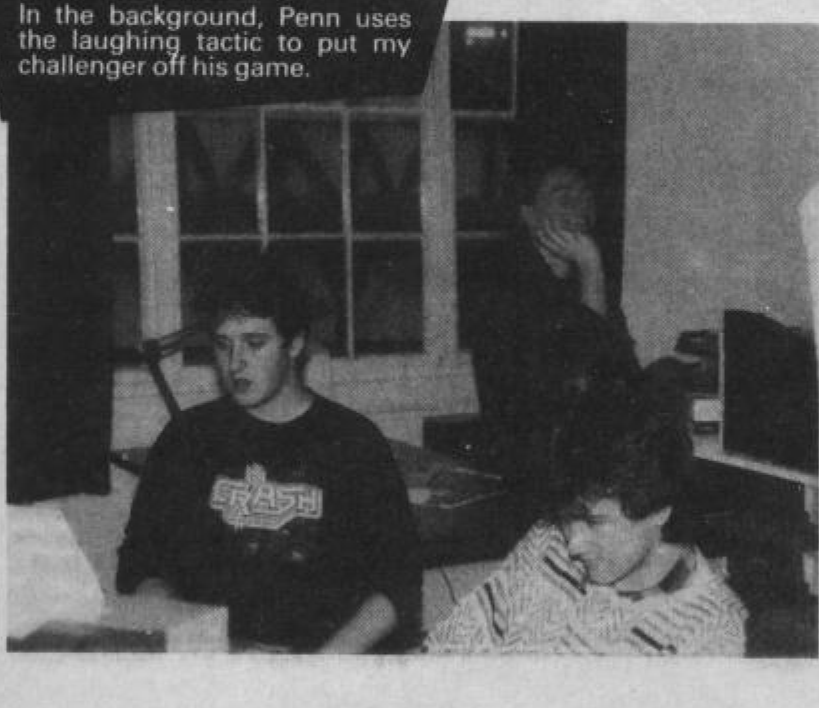
Game Three

While Liddon gorged his face once on another brand of denaturated potato slices and Penn and Rignall congratulated his pathetic achievements, I gave my champion a pep talk and a cup of tea. My champions are of the highest calibre and would never use any kind of 'diversionary tactics'. Not so I.

The game commenced and, as I hoped, Kevin had not finished his tea. Logically he carried it over to the monitor and placed the cup next to it. A look of sudden petrification emerged on Liddon's face. Feeble protestations came from the ZZAP! corner. I growled and they silenced. Power is so nice. Surely this would ruin any chance he may have had of winning? But my champion was doing badly, I think he had realised my tactics and was feeling bad about it. Oh dear. Using his minimalist tactic once more, Liddon ploughed through to the last screen and was waiting for The Large Mister to appear. I had realised this is where his main weakness was, so I sat and prayed.

Liddon unleashed four bombs only to be killed by fatty as he was about unleash the fifth. He got five bombs once more but had to wait for ages and when Porky finally appeared the poor phlong had no chance of reacting in time at all and yet another life was lost. Meanwhile Kevin

In the background, Penn uses the laughing tactic to put my challenger off his game.



was on the third screen.

Liddon once more waited for an exceedingly long time for Fatman to appear but was killed as soon as he did. Ha, my champion was on the last level and doing well. Liddon was now panicking and desperately trying to get back to the position he had previously held. He got to level three, Kevin killed his final Fatty and the challenge was over!

My champion had won!

Pleasure flows through my very system circuits and I wonder 'Who will they pit against me next month?'



Kevin Fairbrother — O Brave Challenger.

1985 (Mastertronic)
22,982 Neil Rolls, Wethersfield, Essex
20,579 Jason Pulfer, Bury St Eds, Suffolk
19,250 Stephen Sherlock, Wirral, Merseyside

ACE (Cascade)
9,950 L/CPL John Paget, Lad Reme BFPO 41
1,820 David Charles, Leicester

ACTION BIKER/CLUMSY COLIN (Mastertronic)
268,452 Adrian Webberley, Crowborugh, E Sussex
267,139 Colin Box, Brampton, Cumbria
266,133 C Roberts, Midlesbro', Cleveland

BATALYX (Ariolasoft)
566,708,490 David Weaver, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs
82,483,150 Ansel Lawrence, Port Talbot, West Glam
20,778,410 Robin Levy, Whipton, Exeter

BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
233,483 Gary Penn, ZZAP!
142,803 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

BALLBLAZER (Activision)
Shut out droid 9 James Smith, Chingford, London
Shut out droid 9 Richard Tatterton, Holgate, York
Shut out droid 9 Mahsin Shamshad, Newsome, Huddersfield

BLUE MAX (US (Gold)
33,820 Stephen Roberts, Alton, Hants
33,730 Martin Beaver, Swindon, Wilts
27,080 Mike Woodman, Llansamlet, Swansea

BEACH HEAD (US Gold)
838,200 Michael Chappell, Kent
836,200 Steven Jones, Formby
808,000 Peter Mason, Inverness

BLADE RUNNER (CRL)
4,720 Gary Liddon, ZZAP!

BEACH HEAD II (US Gold)
1,872,300 Robert Henwood, Bridgewater, Somerset
1,833,010 John Yates, Buxton, Derbyshire
1,477,500 Richard Cozens, Boston, Lincs

BOUNTY BOB (US Gold)
8,585,600 Kristin Keegan, Kilmarnoch, Ayrshire
1,089,010 Sheriff Salama
414,300 Alan Riddiough, Saltburn, Cleveland

BLACKWYCHE (Ultimate)
Finished 0.25 Colin May, Hollesley, Suffolk
Finished 0.35 C J Pether, Axbridge, Somerset
Finished 0.50 Martin Royle, Liverpool

BARRY MCGUIGAN'S BOXING (Activision)
$12,131,000 R Andrews, Peterlee, Co Durham

CAD CAM WARRIOR (Taskset)
121,053 Marc Childerhouse, Ashmanhaugh, Norwich
17,999 Stuart Hine, Tylers Green, Bucks
11,018 Richard Chalu, Norwich, Norfolk

CRAZY COMETS (Martech)
213,944 Martin Keeves, Birmingham
74,230 M O'Reilly, Rishton, Lancs
61,477 Terry Dibden, London W6 8PS

THE SCORELORD SPEAKETH

A month of rapturous joy no less! Another crazed, ego—driven ZZAP! reviewer disposed off with ease!! My life has been so enjoyable in the past few months. Next month another ZZAP! reviewer will be desperately trying to beat one of my worthy challengers. Who will it be? You'll have to wait

The first thing that was brought to my attention this month was a lack of continuity between my elite scorers over the excellent game *Paradroid*. A certain **Andrew Mackay** who can be found residing in the small village of **Liverpool** sent me a score of 213,885. He claims that it took him four hours to achieve his score which was amassed by going through all eight ships, but details were lacking ∴. what about the names of all the ships? Meanwhile, **David West Jnr** of **Cradlehall, Inverness** claimed to have scored 201,565, only this time it took six and a half hours. Again details were lacking and I'm afraid that it takes a lot more than 'all eight ships are identical' to verify a score. So, David and Andrew, I will be expecting explanations in the not-too-distant future . . .

After that matter of discontinuity I'm otherwise pleased to announce that all scores appear to be in order. *Ballblazer* seems to have attracted a lot of attention, judging by the numerous claim forms which I've received, and quite a few games players have shut out level 9 droids. The Scorelord sends his congratulations to all.

Next month I hope to see some scores on the highly commendable *Bounder*, *Revs* (quickest lap times) and *Mercenary*. To qualify for an entry in the *Mercenary* score table you must send in the **amount of credits which you have when you escape the planet**. No other scores will be accepted — you have been warned.

Until next month, when my scintillating speech section returns . . .



CHALLENGE



COMMANDO (Elite)
7,015,000 Julian Bryant, Reading, Berkshire
4,856,200 Jimmy Thomas, Liecester.
4,124,160 Justin Whiteoak, Edinburgh

CONFUZION (Incentive)
49,325 David Farrow, Hessle, N Humbs
44,700 Andrew Macdonald, Ware, Herts
31,145 Colin Box, Brampton, Cumbria

CAULDRON (Palace)
1,113,475 Simon Anforth, London
160,000 Darren Smith, Suffolk
31,250 Gary Penn, ZZAP!

CHICKEN CHASE (Firebird)
3,691,180 Colin Box, Brampton, Cumbria
1,265,433 David West, Cradlehall, Inverness
1,226,795 Karl Dent, Somercotes, Derby

CYBOTRON (Anirog)
3,652,500 Richard Barker, Leeds
1,250,000 Stephen Blidgeon, Manchester
436,200 James Thomas, Fishguard, Dyfed

DEFENDER (Atarisoft)
3,115,350 Ian Carrel, Langstone Hants
3,005,675 Gareth Baron, Tyne and Wear.
3,000,150 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

DIG DUG (US Gold)
2,355,890 Philip Hogarth, Dovecot, Liverpool
999,400 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt
913,240 S Brewster, Middleton, Manchester

DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC (Ariolasoft)
1,342,310 M Watkins, Newport, Gwent
1,222,210 Malcolm Stretton, Berkhamstead, Herts
930,940 Paul Taberner, Astley, Manchester

DROPZONE (UK Gold)
3,246,980 M Orwell, Bognor Regis, W Sussex
2,028,780 Peter Mcarthy, Weston-S-Mare, Avon
1,862,780 Kevin Fairbrother, Stapleford, Notts

EVIL DEAD (Palace Video)
953,200 S Jackson, Northwich, Cheshire

ENTOMBED (Ultimate)
Fin. 0.36 Mark Wilson, Durham
Fin. 0.38 Gary Penn, ZZAP!
Fin. 0.40 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

ENCOUNTER (Novagen)
756,100 Stephen Blidgeon, Wythenshawe, Manchester
643,000 Vinay Narayan, London E7
632,000 Julian Venus, Winchester

FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD (Ocean)
87,000 Gary Sampson, Stratford, London
87,000 Darren Mudd, Middlesbro', Cleveland
87,000 Liam Jeffries, Penymynydd, Clwyd

FINDERS KEEPERS (Mastertronic
£4289.80 David Sowden, Goole, N Humbs
£4,021.97 Mark Leitch, Norwich, Norfolk
£3,188.55 Keith Roach, Sutton Coldfield, W Midlands

FIGHTING WARRIOR (Melbourne House)
4,235 Jason Roberts, Crosby, Liverpool

GUARDIAN (Alligata)
1,020,950 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!
755,250 Stephen Meddins, Lichfield, Staffs
592,600 Andy Moss, Coventry

GHOSTBUSTERS (Activision)
$53,500 Rachel Watson, Aberystwyth, Dyfed
$52,000 Craig Dibble, Droitwich
$45,000 Warren Minton, Luton, Herts

THE GOONIES (US Gold)
184,880 Elliot Barrie, Thetford, Norfolk
92,065 Terry Townshend, Gt Yarmouth, Norfolk
58,185 Julian Bryant, Reading, Berks

GRIBBLY'S DAY OUT (Hewson Consultants)
56,826 Bradley Cole, Bristol
32,306 Colin Box, Brampton, Cumbria
17,560 Ieuan Edwards, Ramgate, Kent

HUNTER PATROL (Mastertronic)
109,800 Richard Laure, Newton Mearns, Glasgow

HYPERSPORTS (Imagine)
186,411 Arron Dore, Brixham, Devon
175,512 Norman Stevens, Stratford-On-Avon, Warks
153,938 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

JUMPMAN (Epyx)
156,300 Paul Campbell, N Ireland
104,550 I Final, Leighton Buzzard, Beds

KONG STRIKES BACK (Ocean)
2,421,700 Steven Marr, Dundee, Scotland
2,071,210 Drew Roger, Dunbartonshire, Scotland
2,030,795 Jonathan Smith, Newport, Gwent

KORONIS RIFT (Activsion)
85,610 R Mann, Coventry, W Mids

LODE RUNNER (Ariolasoft)
1,326,425 Tony Smith, Elizabeth Vale, S Australia

MR DO (US Gold)
7,566,250 Chris Jones, Exeter, Devon
7,038,050 Bradley Cole, Downend, Bristol
5,286,400 Arron Dore, Brixham, Devon

MONTY ON THE RUN (Gremlin Graphics)
7,000 Nigel Froud, Farncombe, Surrey
5,300 Mohsin Shamshad, Newsome, Huddersfield
3,550 Dan Williams, London

NIGHT MISSION PINBALL (Sub Logic)
38,234,230 M O'Reilly, Rishton, Lancs
10,783,460 Julian Rignall & Gary Penn, ZZAP!
3,586,560 Gary Penn, ZZAP!

OUTLAWS (Ultimate)
15,350 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

PITFALL II (Activision)
199,000 Mark Hardy, Norwich, Norfolk
199,000 Mark Bishop, Hemel Hempstead, Herts

PASTFINDER (Activision)
999,990 Colin Box, Brampton, Cumbria
380,190 Jonathan Bethell, Eaton Bishop, Herefordshire
366,740 Michael Cox, Glen Parva, Leicester

POLE POSITION (US Gold)
134,650 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!
132,700 Nicholas Marshall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
131,000 Robin Candy, CRASH

PARADROID (Hewson Consultants)
95,335 Robert Orchard, Essex
85,340 Andrew Braybrook (wot dunnit)
73,841 Andrew Mckay, Liverpool

QUO VADIS (The Edge)
6,558,750 Martin Speight, Saltburn-by-Sea, Cleveland
3,000,100 John Yates, Buxton, Derbyshire
2,970,400 D Davies, Altrincham, Trafford

ROLAND'S RAT RACE (Ocean)
137,710 Wayne Atkinson, Warley, W Mids
94,950 Beverley Turnbull, Colchester, Essex
47,400 Mark Taylor, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex

ROBIN OF THE WOOD (Odin)
88 Lee Ellershaw, Blackpool, Lancs
84 Gareth Trotter, Edgeware, Middlesex

ROCK 'N' BOLT (Activision)
$1,044,207.75 Gavin Berry, Nottingham
$340,189.40 Nicholas Birds, Buxton, Derbyshire
$136,905.25 Jaz/Gaz (relay), ZZAP!

RESCUE ON FRACTALUS (Activision)
302,780 Nick Marshall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
296,498 T N Branston, Cropwell Butler, Notts
255,897 Matthew Clark, Sutton, Surrey

ROCKFORD'S RIOT (Monolith)
112,065 Colin Box, Brampton, Cumbria
73,399 Craig Norris, Basingstoke, Hants
64,744 Martin Hewson, Witney, Oxon

RASKEL (Budgie)
593,100 Neill Cain, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
210,800 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

RAID ON BUNGELING BAY (Ariolasoft)
259,650 George Harris, Kirrimuir, Angus
167,450 Simon Perry, Woking, Surrey
146,200 Glenn Vyse, Irnham, Lincs

RAMBO (Ocean)
3,000,197 Andrew Grifo, Walkden Worsley, Manchester
1,108,200 Roger Louison, Wembley, Middx
559,000 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks

SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)
70,613 James Robb, Dumfermline, Fife
67,000 Dean Ryall, Southampton
59,800 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

STAR WARS (Parker Bros)
126,642,160 Richard Cosgrove, Nottingham
100,366,474 M Woolford, Yeadon, Leeds
50,074,963 Paul Baker, Swindon, Wilts

SUPER ZAXXON (US Gold)
59,000 M Stubbs, Cleveland
55,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

SKYFOX (Ariolasoft)
660,500 Craig Saunders, Grays, Essex
652,000 John Bell, Denton, Manchester
230,800 M Smith, Cheltenham

SABRE WULF (Firebird)
35,545 Mark Wheeler, Skegness, Lincs

SPELUNKER (Ariolasoft)
410,275 Jason Roberts, Crosby, Liverpool

SPACE PILOT II (Anirog)
78,400 Nicholas Marshall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
42,100 Julian Rignall, ZZAP!

SUPER PIPELINE II (Taskset)
208,920 Paul Adams, Huntingdon, Cambs
128,400 Warren Craigie, Edinburgh
150,420 Gary Penn, ZZAP!

THING ON A SPRING (Gremlin Graphics)
31,796 Darren Broad, Bromley, Kent
26,102 Andy Williams, S Wirral, Cheshire
13,257 Andrew Grifo, Worsley, Manchester

TRANSFORMERS (Ocean)
4,964 Stewart Bladel, Willenhall, W Mids

TOY BIZARRE (Activision)
603,760 J Mclean, Rhondda, Mid Glam
599,200 Philip Wilson, Belfast
206,100 Adam Long, Ilford, Essex

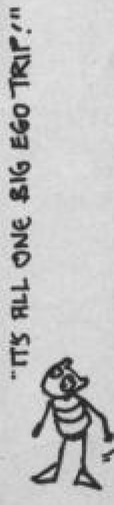
WIZARD'S LAIR (Bubble Bus)
188,665 Philip Alderson, Scarborough
166,985 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
98,540 Dan Williams, London

WIZARD OF WAR (Commodore)
515,600 Jon Baker, Moreton Thame
400,100 David Scott, Walsall, W Midlands
356,200 Simon Hayland, Shepperton, Middlesex

WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)
302,160 D Gauden, Bridgnorth, Shrops
122,410 Ross Cairns, Scone, Perthshire
112,550 Julian Bryant, Reading, Berks

WIZARDRY (The Edge)
15,600 Matthew Ward, Ilford, Essex
12,800 Andrew Grifo, Walkdern, Worsley
7,100 Julian Rignall ZZAP!

Z (Rhino)
211,100 Gary Liddon, ZZAP!
208,800 Kevin Fairbrother, Stapleford, Notts
94,700 N J Jowett, Solihull, W Mids

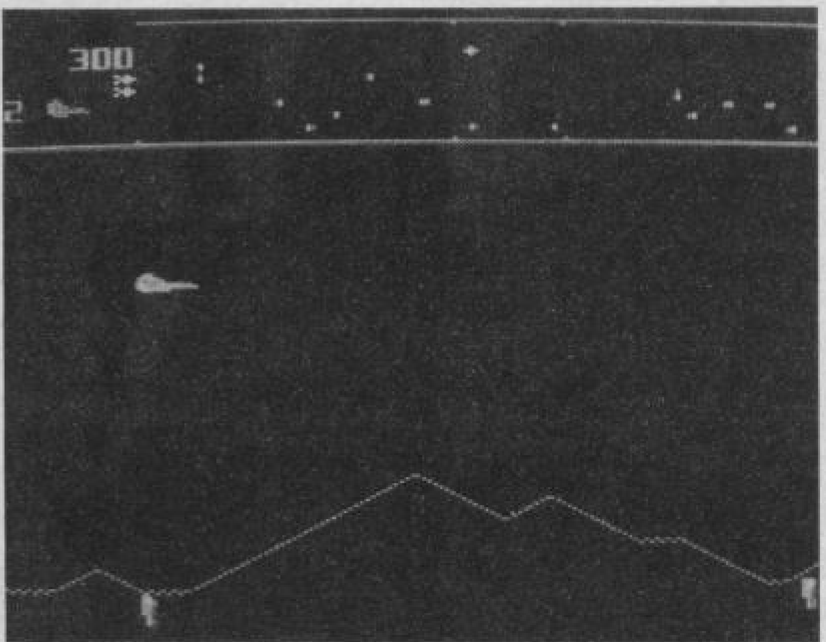


ZZAP! TEST

GUARDIAN

PasT BlasteR

Alligata, £7.95 cass (since deleted), Joystick with keys or keys



Right then, no beating about the bush, *Guardian* is an excellent version of Eugene Jarvis' classic arcade game *Defender*. For those of you who haven't seen *Defender* (Oh come on you must have seen it, everyone's been to the little arcade at Southend. You know, the one next to the gift shop that sells those funny shaped bars of soap and the cute battery powered puppies) I will explain. You play the goody and the idea is to save the innocent people from the baddies. The baddies' aim is to capture and destroy all the humanoids on the planet surface. Each humanoid captured boosts the aliens' sum energy and with all the humanoids in their possession the enemy is strong enough to destroy the planet and concentrate on attacking you.

Your vehicle of vendetta is a starship — and a versatile beast it is too, as it is capable of some quick manoeuvring and very rapid gunfire. The ship is able to move up, down, left and right by using thrust in the right direction. The weapons system is quite comprehensive. First there is the rapid fire laser cannon which destroys any aliens in sight. Then there's the smart bomb which is lethal and is only meant to be used in emergencies. A tap on the relevant key results in all alien life currently on screen vapourising instantly with a blaze that'd bring a tear to the eye of any pyrotechnician. However, you only have a limited supply of smart bombs, an extra one being gained every ten thousand points along with an extra life, so they must be used wisely. Finally, hyperspace is another emergency-only piece of equipment that transports you to another part of the planet, but may well plonk the ship in the middle of an alien. Risky stuff.



I hate giving anything a GL 5 (you know the thumbs up special), the picture looks so tacky. Life would be so nice if everything could be given the finger choking good GL 1. With Guardian *there's no option — a gormless grin special GL 5 just has to be used. Though games flow in and out of the office,* Guardian *is the only one I can still go back to and that's after two and a half years! That's real value for money. Technically it's still amazing, using very clever sprite sharing routines to get lots of things on screen at once. This is a truly excellent game that deserves the time and money of any 64 owner. Buy it now.*

As a *Guardian* your reason for living is to protect the humanoids to the death and destroy the alien aggressors. The aliens attack in waves and at the end of each wave a bonus is awarded for every humanoid alive. At the start of the game eight humanoids live on the planet but if all of them are kablammed by landers the end of the world happens. *Guardian* challenges the player by making the different aliens more frantic as you progress so they fight harder and faster. Your ship benefits from no such performance improvement so things can get pretty tough.

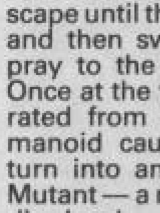
There are a number of different breeds in the alien troops that scour the planet, each performing a special task. **Landers** are the main attack force and their prime task is to capture, airlift and destroy the humanoids. Other baddies in the cast are mostly concerned with hindering your attempt to protect the humanoids.

Quite prolific are the **Bombers** — these gleefully dispatch stationary air bombs as they traverse the skyline. **Pods** are seemingly harmless creatures but, as the name implies, they carry a load — in the form of a host of **Swarmers**, which home in on the ship, continually firing furiously. Nastiest of all are the **Baiters**, which materialise in the vicinity if your efforts to cleanse the world of all alien life forms take too long. Moving at a truly furious pace, Baiters head straight for your craft. Only a quick eye and a deft hand can save you from death from a Baiters body blow.

There are two different types of screen to keep track of the mayhem. The largest is placed on the base of the display is the main scanner showing the planet ground and your ship. While the ground scrolls left and right the ship stays relatively steady. The scenery itself is none to exciting — it's a mountainous terrain represented by zig-zag lines and is where the humanoids live and from where the Landers snatch them. Landers wander along the landscape until they find a humanoid and then swoop to carry their pray to the top of the screen. Once at the top the energy liberated from the consumed humanoid causes the Lander to turn into an extremely vicious Mutant — a nasty that fights and dies hard.

The other scanner sits at the top of the screen and shows all off-screen activity such as the location of the enemy and the humanoids. Use of the scanner to good effect is an important part of the game as it's possible to see the landers picking up humanoids. If you're quick enough in getting to the scene of the crime the Lander can be shot and the humanoid caught as it plummets groundwards. Five hundred points get thrown your way for this piece of trick flying.

If all the humanoids are destroyed then the ground disintegrates and every Lander mutates. This makes things very hard indeed but the humanoids are replaced every fifth sheet.



Defender *is my all-time favourite video game and naturally I welcome any sort of conversion or derivative with glee, especially one as good as this.* Guardian *is about the best conversion around on any micro and contains nearly every feature of the arcade game. There are a couple of things which are slightly inaccurate but they are pretty minor and don't detract from the game. If you want a definitive* Defender *clone then look no further than this † — although old it's not showing its age at all.*



Guardian *is one of the few games I come back to play time after time and has been a personal favourite since its release way back in early 1984. Though the graphics and sound are of a simplistic nature, they are very effective and the game wouldn't be the same without them. It's a shame* Guardian *didn't elicit much enthusiasm from the gamesplaying public as it is certainly an all time classic and makes a worthy addition to the software library of anyone who lusts after a superlative shoot em up.*

† And despite being 'deleted', you can still obtain a copy of *Guardian*, thanks to the special ZZAP!/Alligata offer. See page 99.

Presentation 78%
No options but there are a lot of 'nice' touches to make up for this 'deficiency'.

Graphics 72%
Simple, but very effective.

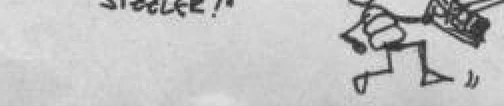
Sound 68%
Again, simple but used to good effect.

Hookability 95%
Although the keyboard layout may prove initially awkward to some, the game is very easy to get into and great fun to play.

Lastability 96%
The highly addictive nature of the game ensures plenty of lasting interest.

Value For Money 94%
Excellent value at eight quid, but even better value if purchased as part of the **Fistful of Fun** package.

Overall 95%
A classic game that shouldn't be overlooked by those even vaguely interested in the genre.



ZZAP! TIPS

Once again Gary Penn delves deep into his mailbag and rummages around a bit until he finds an assortment of tips worthy of your attention, then throws them all up in the air, lets them fall to the ground in slow motion and prints them in the order he comes across them as they lie embedded deep in the luscious pile of the ZZAP! Towers carpet (it's really threadbare - please note Inland Revenue).

Hmm. How shall I start this month's intro? 'Greetings fellow ZZAP!ers!'. Nah. How about 'Hi there tipsters!'? Nope. 'Welcome to this month's ZZAP! tips!'. That's not too bad — I know: 'Here's this month bumper bundle of playing tips, including some amazing *Rambo* POKEs and maps of the first two levels of *Bounder*'. There, that's got the niggly bits out of the way. Next month I'll waffle on a bit about my 'American cousin' bringing hot new software to my door at some ridiculous time of the morning, just as I'm getting an amazing high score on one of the three arcade machines that I own. Or maybe I'll tell you about the time some incredibly famous programmer rang me up to tell me of his new game. Better still, I'll stop plagiarising and not write an intro at all. But for now, on with the tips . . .

Z (Rino)

If you're having problems disposing of the Control Ship on level four, try this short tip from Jeffrey Minter **(his name sounds familiar) of Tadley, Hants. Simply collect five bombs and wait for the Control Ship to appear. When it does, release the bombs and they will home in — there's no need to aim them.**

Also, a quickie from our very own Gary T Liddon. **Shooting approximately ten aliens causes the Energy Pods to appear, so it's best to keep firing.**

Oh, one other thing — you only really need to shoot one hole in the barrier protecting the transporter unit, as with a bit of practice you can get through with very little problem.

RAMBO (Ocean)

Remember the tip for *Hypersports* where if you stop the cassette player while the game is loading you can hear the music all the way through? No? Oh well . . . Anyway, if you stop the cassette player once the picture of Rambo has been drawn, you can hear the loading music for *Rambo* all the way through. Cor.

THE YOUNG ONES (Orpheus)

Those kind young chappies at Orpheus have provided a few helpful hints for anyone having difficulty with their latest release . . .

The object of the game is to move out of the house. To do this you must collect the eight or nine objects belonging to the character you are playing and place them inside the appropriate container. Vyvyan needs the bin liner, Mike the suitcase, Neil the wheelbarrow and Rick the rucksack.

Use the radio and TV to listen for hints.

The TALK icon incites your character to tell you what he would like to do, so make use of it.

Here are some individual hints . . .

Vyvyan. SPG needs tempting before he can be put in his cage. The radio hint about salmonella tells you where to put the kebab and the lager.

Mike. Phone up Colonel Gadaffi to sell him the bomb (you'll need 10p for the phone). The kitty likes peas, but not frozen so try using a blowtorch.

Neil. Cook the lentils before putting them in the thermos flask. Plant the seeds in the grave, but make the tea first.

Rick. There is a special book to hold the girly dress. Don't forget to wash the dirty undies.

In general, grab the key to Narnia whenever you see it. Watch what the other characters do with the objects. Remember that the game is based heavily on the TV series, so most of the gameplay and objects have appeared in one or more of the episodes. Watch out for red herrings. Your score is based on elapsed time so use the speaking clock to see how long you have taken.



If you have any further problems write to Orpheus at the following address . . . Orpheus Ltd, Dept TYO, Unit 1, Church Farm Estate, Hatley St George, Nr Sandy, Beds, SG19 3HP . . . and don't forget to include an SAE.

BARRY MCGUIGAN'S BOXING (Activision)

A very small tip from Philip Emberson **of Grimsby, South Humberside. Devote 75% of training time to roadwork and the other 25% to weights and spar time for massive endurance.**

MONTY ON THE RUN (Gremlin)

One more for the high score table . . . Enter Arthur Scargill for a somewhat bemusing response.

MERCENARY (Novagen)

Now you're not going to believe this but the cheese can be flown. Yep, just board it as you would any normal craft (although this is a different kind of Kraft (groan) as Novagen's Bruce Jordan pointed out) and you're free to take off at your leisure. Andrew Grifo **of Walkden, Worsely found that out. Don't know how, but he did. Thank you Andy.**

An extra challenge from Novagen for *Mercenary* freaks . . .

'The facility to arrange these unusual pictures of objects is present within the published game. If ever you work out for yourself how it is done, do let me know. Novagen will also be very pleased to hear from you, and who knows, they may reveal some of the other weird facets of *Mercenary* that remain undiscovered.'

FIGHT NIGHT (US Gold)

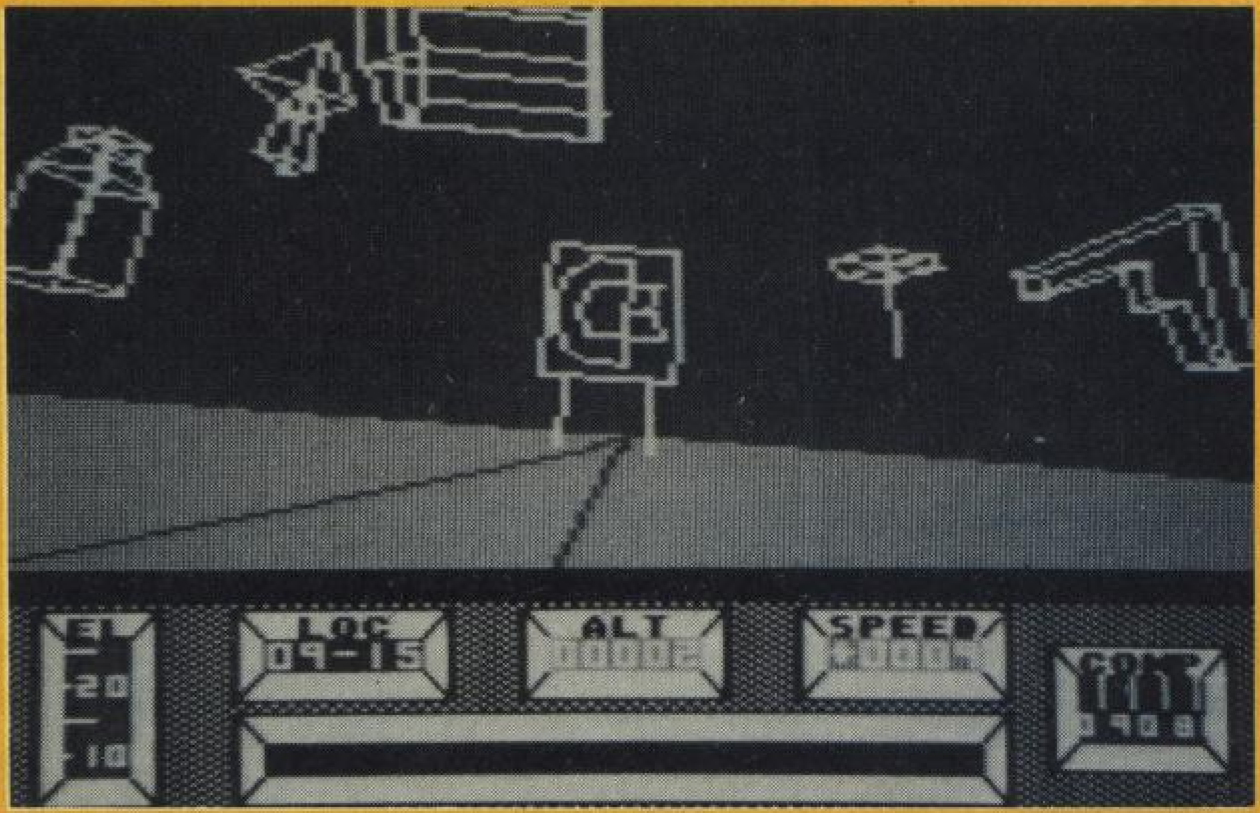
James Fish **of Grimsby, South Humberside offers advice on how to tackle the five boxers . . .**

Dip Stick. Move in close and repeatedly punch him until he adjusts his guard. When he does, change your punch accordingly.

Kid Kastro. Punch him in the stomach until he lowers his guard, step back and then let him have it with a walking punch to the cigar.

Hu Him. Has a strong tendency to keep his guard up but has a rather weak stomach, so keep throwing body blows. If his guard drops, one or two jabs will make him raise it.

British Bulldog. Walking punches work best but must



be executed quickly if they are to prove effective. Be careful not to get involved in an exchange of blows.
Bronx Bomber. Watch out for his highly deadly superblow, although at the start of the round it has little effect. The best technique is to perform walking punches and retreat if they are blocked.

BALLBLAZER (Activision)

Matthew Hodgson **of Beckenham, Kent has managed to shut out Droid nine in 34.2 seconds — impressive, eh? Here's how he manages to score so quickly . . .**

Just before the plasmorb is ejected into the playfield, move right and stop dead when you are about four squares away from the edge. Push the joystick forward and when the plasmorb enters the grid, go for it. Keep moving forward for a couple of seconds once you have possession of the plasmorb, then veer left towards the goalbeams. With practice you should be able to score every time.

Poke
Poke
You're something of a Joke
Poke
Making programmers choke
Poke
Like thick, black smoke
When you get past the cloak
Of protection

COMMANDO (Elite)

Alex Hopcroft **of Tamworth, Staffs has some whizzo POKEs for this disappointing arcade conversion Firstly, rewind the tape to the beginning and type** LOAD (RETURN). **When the READY prompt appears enter these POKEs:**

POKE 1010,76 (RETURN)
POKE 1011,248 (RETURN)
POKE 1012,252 (RETURN)

Now type RUN (RETURN) **to load the first part of the program. When the computer resets enter the following . . .**

POKE 816,167 (RETURN)
POKE 817,2 (RETURN)
POKE 2086,248 (RETURN)
POKE 2087,252 (RETURN)

SYS 2061 (RETURN) **to load the remaining parts of the game. The computer will reset allowing you to type in these POKEs . . .**

POKE 14631,0 (RETURN) **for unlimited lives**
POKE 2456,69 (RETURN) **for unlimited grenades**

SYS 2128 (RETURN) **starts the game. Oh yes, while we're on the subject of** *Commando* **here are some smart POKEs from 'Forest' of Southfields, London. Before you start the game with** SYS 2128, **type in the following . .**

POKE 2198,96 (RETURN)
SYS 24426 (RETURN)
SYS 2193 (RETURN)
To hear the tune played during the game.

or . . .
POKE 2194,1 (RETURN)
SYS 24426 (RETURN)
SYS 2193 (RETURN)
To hear the high score tune.

RAMBO (Ocean)

The following routine was also supplied by 'Forest'. It doesn't give you anything as trivial as infinite lives — what it does is turn *Rambo* **the 'game' into** *Rambo* **the 'music system'. Confused? Don't be — type in this listing first and I'll explain after.**

```
10 PRINT CHR$(147)
20 FOR A=304 TO 317:READ
B:POKE A,B:NEXT A
30 FOR C=32768 TO
32855:READ D:POKE
C,D:NEXT C
40 POKE 53280,0
50 SYS 32768
100 DATA 173, 0, 160, 141, 0,
64, 169
110 DATA 55, 133, 1, 76, 226,
252, 0
120 DATA 169, 128, 133, 157,
160, 1, 152
130 DATA 170, 32, 186, 255,
169, 0, 133
140 DATA 183, 32, 213, 255,
169, 31, 141
150 DATA 150, 3, 169, 128,
141, 151, 3
160 DATA 76, 99, 3, 32, 76,
128, 169
170 DATA 54, 141, 225, 65,
162, 0, 189
180 DATA 55, 128, 157, 228,
65, 232, 224
190 DATA 32, 208, 245, 76, 0,
64, 173
200 DATA 0, 64, 141, 0, 160,
169, 11
210 DATA 141, 17, 208, 76,
84, 164, 70
220 DATA 79, 82, 69, 83, 84,
33, 169
230 DATA 48, 141, 60, 65,
169, 1, 141
240 DATA 61, 65, 96, 234,
234, 234, 234
```

Check through it thoroughly to make sure there are no errors and save it out to tape for future use. Put your previously rewound *Rambo* **tape into the cassette recorder, type** RUN (RETURN) **and press play when instructed.** *Rambo* **will now load as normal, but it won't run. When the computer resets type** SYS 16863 (RETURN) **to start the program. The screen should have a white band across it — don't despair as this is correct. You can now listen to all of the tunes and sound effects from the game by simply pressing certain keys. There are two sets of music and sound effects. Press 1 to access the first set and then any of the following keys . . .**

Q — Sound effect
E — Jingle
R — Sound effect
T — Sound effect
Y — Sound effect
O — Sound effect
P — Sound effect
S — Sound effect
D — Music
F — Music
G — Short tune
H — Short tune
J — Short tune
K — Short tune
L — Short tune
X — Sound effect
N — Sound effect
M — Piece of music played during game

Press 2 to access the second set, then any of these keys . .

E — Sound effect
D — Drums
B — Short tune

Pressing the SPACE BAR 'kills' the tune or sound effect playing.
Pressing 'up arrow' advances the tune playing — a sort of 'fast forward' facility.
Pressing RETURN determines which voices are on or off. For example, you can have voice one, two or three playing on its own, or voices one and two, two and three or one and three playing together. Some weird sounds can be obtained with this function and it's best to experiment to see, or rather hear, what's possible. It ends up being a bit like a computer 'scratching' device!

ROCKET ROGER (Alligata)

Gary Saunders of Colchester, Essex sent in some POKEs to make this game a bit easier to play — and you don't need a reset switch to enter them! Load the instructions, stop the cassette deck and turn off the computer. Now enter this short listing . . .

```
10 FOR A=0 TO 34:READ C:POKE 52224+A,C:NEXT A
20 SYS 52227
30 DATA 76, 174, 2, 169, 1, 170, 168, 32
40 DATA 186, 255, 169, 0, 133, 183, 32, 213
50 DATA 255, 169, 76, 141, 209, 3, 169, 248
60 DATA 141, 210, 3, 169, 252, 141, 211, 3
70 DATA 76, 0, 204
```

Make sure there are no errors and if everything seems hunky dory, type RUN (RETURN) and press play on tape when prompted. The game will now load as normal. When the computer has reset you can enter these POKEs to remove all nasties from the game . . .

```
FOR A=8704 TO 9216:POKE A,0:NEXT A (RETURN)
FOR A=9408 TO 9472:POKE A,0:NEXT A (RETURN)
FOR A=9728 TO 12416:POKE A,0:NEXT A (RETURN)
FOR A=12800 TO 14272: POKE A,0:NEXT A (RETURN)
```

Also . . .
POKE 21291, number of lives (1 to 255) (RETURN)
Type SYS 5600 (RETURN) to start the game.

HYPERCIRCUIT (Alligata)

Yet more POKEs from Gary Saunders (such taste in Christian names). Rewind your *Hypercircuit* tape to the beginning and type in the listing below.

```
10 FOR A=0 TO 34:READ C:POKE 52224+A,C:NEXT A
20 SYS 52227
30 DATA 76, 174, 2, 169, 1, 170, 168, 32
40 DATA 186, 255, 169, 0, 133, 183, 32, 213
50 DATA 255, 169, 76, 141, 209, 3, 169, 248
60 DATA 141, 210, 3, 169, 252, 141, 211, 3
70 DATA 76, 0, 204
```

Now check for any errors. Everything OK? OK, type RUN (RETURN) and press play on tape to load the game. The computer will reset some time later, allowing you to enter this POKE . . .

POKE 31352, number of lives (1 to 255) (RETURN)
To start the game type SYS 26624 (RETURN)

GHOSTBUSTERS (Activision)

Last issue I printed some POKEs for this ageing Activision bestseller, but unfortunately the person who sent them in didn't say how to start the game. However, Stephen Griggs of Maidstone, Kent has come to the rescue and says that typing SYS 24576 (RETURN) starts the game, but it does affect the speech on the title screen somewhat.

Right. Something you've all been waiting for . . . How to make your very own reset switch! Yay! Cheers! High pitched whistles and screams! Rapturous applause! Break open a bottle o' Champers chaps! K L Andrews of Wootton Bassett, Nr Swindon, Wiltshire and Toby McKensie of Middlesborough, Cleveland both sent in the following idea . . .
You will need:

1 (one) switch
1 (one) 6 (six) pin din plug
Some wire
A soldering iron
Some solder
1 (one) adult to help you with the soldering (if you ARE an adult, better find another one just in case) . . .

Solder wires to the switch connections and pins 2 (two) and 6 (six) of the din plug (consult your User Guide for details on the din pins). Stick the din plug in the serial port (that's the one the disk drive lead goes into) and now you can reset by simply pressing the switch.

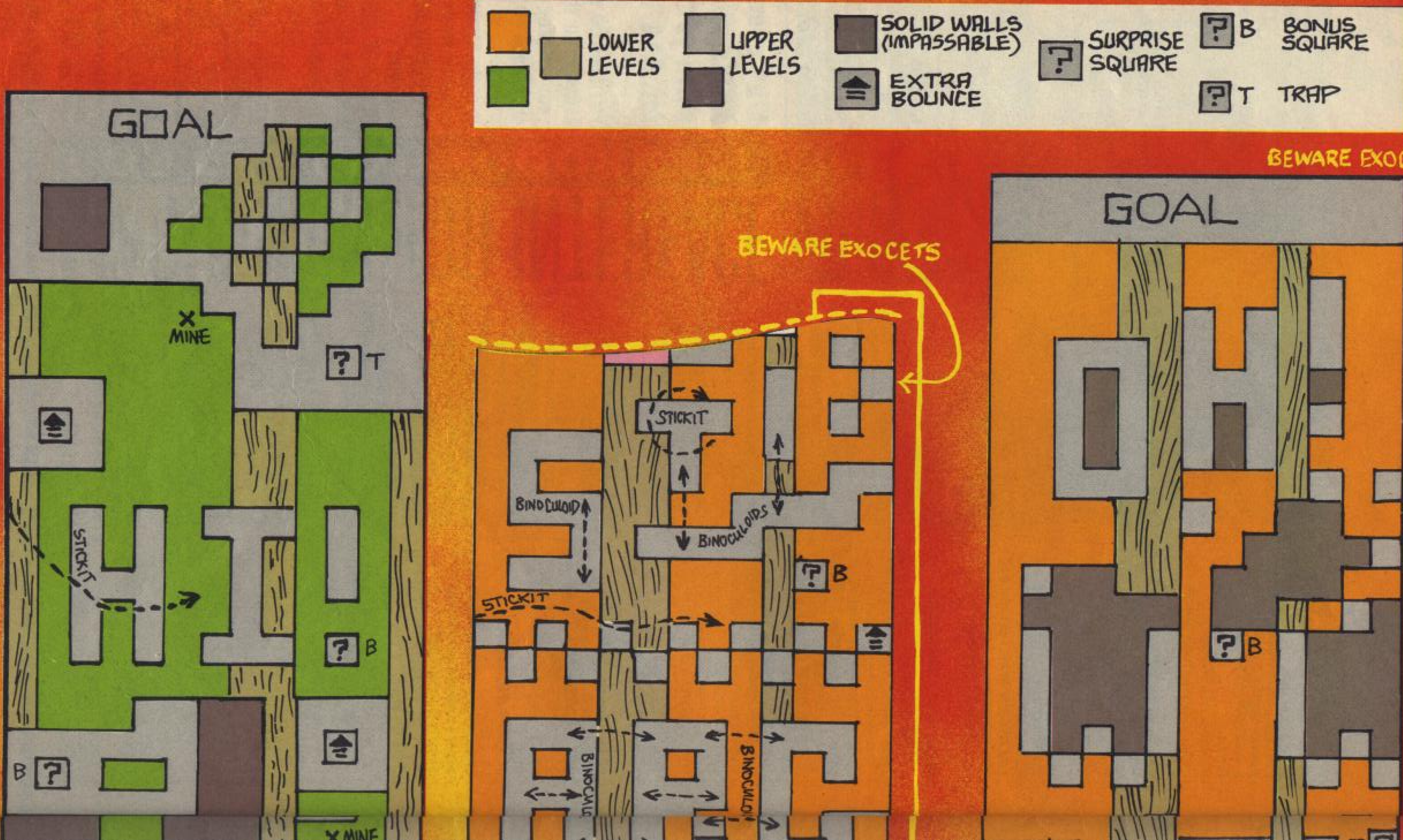
Well, not quite, since Mr Liddon informs me that this won't work on all Commodores. He suggests using the 'wire thingy wotsit' that sticks out of most cassette decks. Touch it against pin three of the user port (for more positive information about the user port, consult the User Guide or even the Programmers Reference Guide should you possess such a luxury).

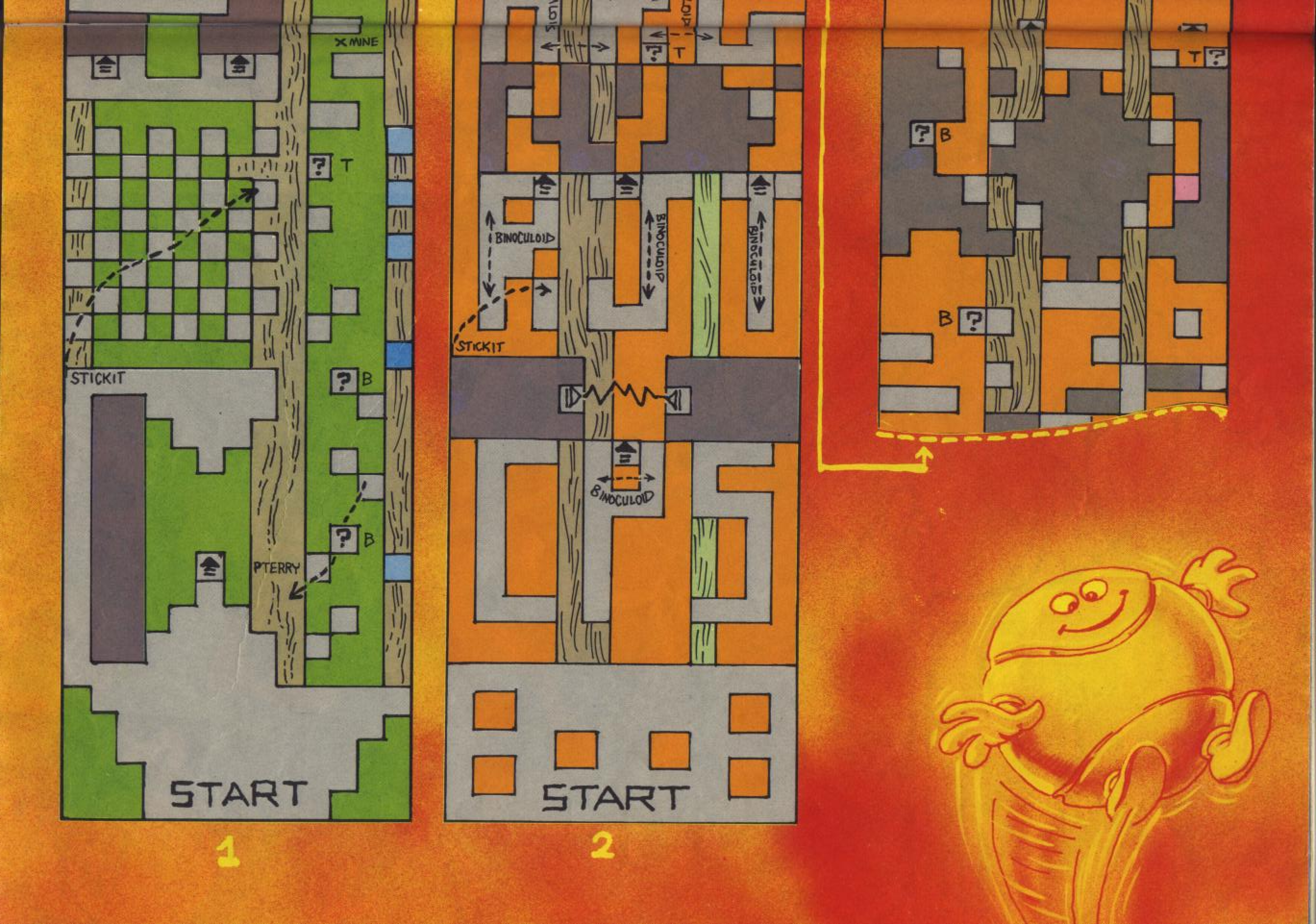
Unfortunately the sands of time have finally run out like the contents of my mailbag. Never mind I'll see you next month with some more juicy tips and tipettes (sounds like a correction fluid). At least I hope so. Please keep the hints and POKEs coming in, because without your contribution there wouldn't be a tips section. And then where would we be? Tipless.

Send all cheats, POKEs, tips, hints, fan mail, money — in fact anything but SAEs — to: **ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.**
Oh yes — make sure ZZAP! MAGAZINE is in the address, 'cos the poor post sorting persons get terribly hassled otherwise.

BOUNDER T·H·E M·A·P

BUT ONLY THE FIRST TWO LEVELS!





X MINE
T
B
STICKIT
PTERRY
START
1
BINOCULOID
STICKIT
START
2
T
B

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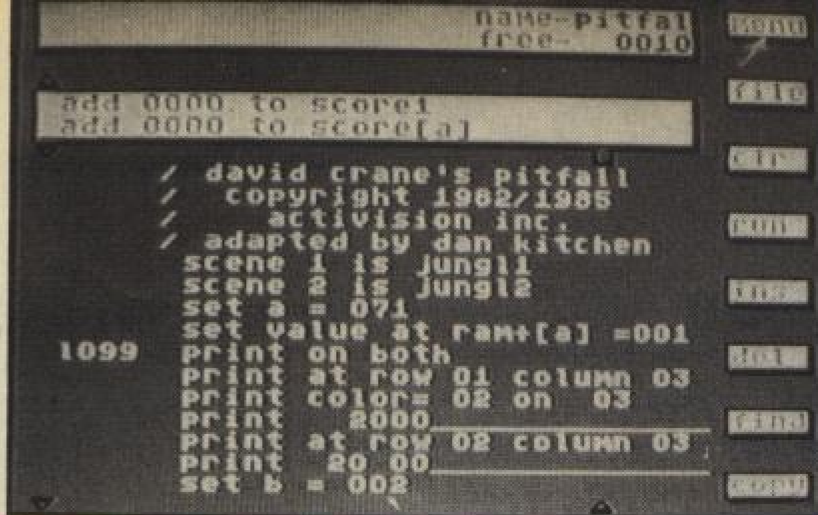
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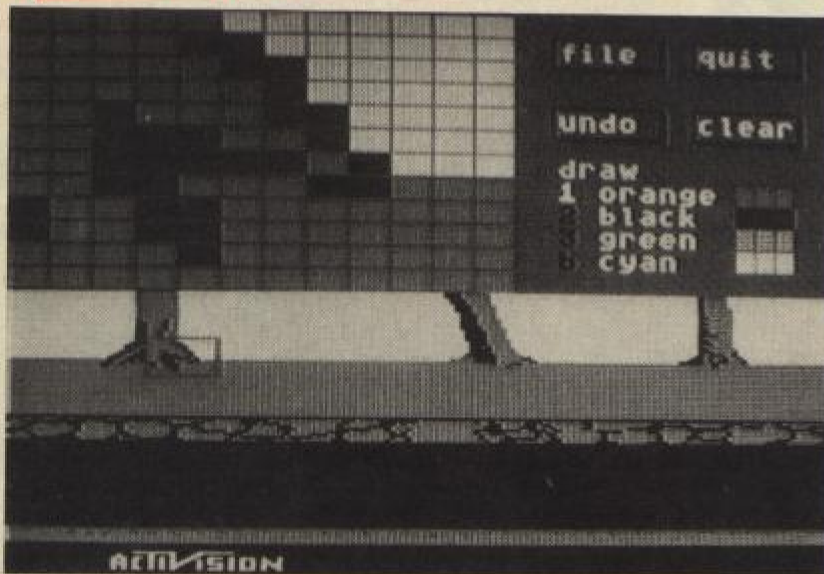
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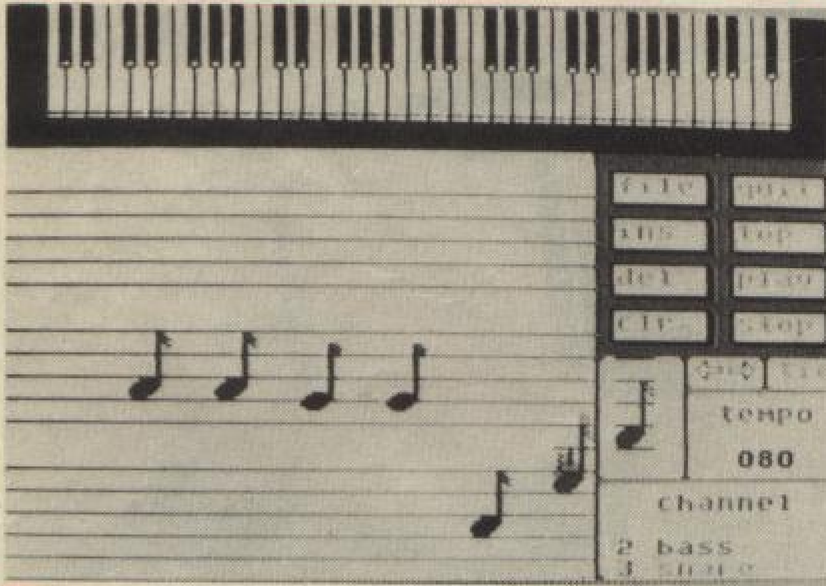
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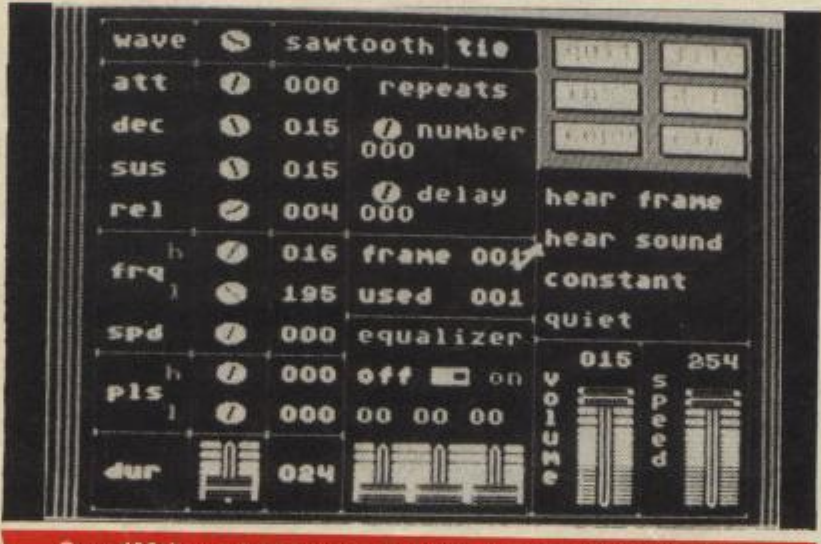
The Editor: GAME MAKER's assembly line, where all the various elements come together.



Zooming in on section of tree in Scene Maker.



Music Maker: the makings of a masterpiece — my first ever composition in progress.



Sound Maker: a dubbing mixer's dream, faders and buttons galore to play with.

GAME MAKER

Activision, £14.99 cass, £19.99 disk, joystick or keys

'Now you can create your own animated computer graphics and games just like the best professional designers with *Game Maker* by Garry Kitchen,' boasts the opening paragraph of the manual supplied with the program. Really? Gary Penn puts the package through its paces and comes to a conclusion . . .

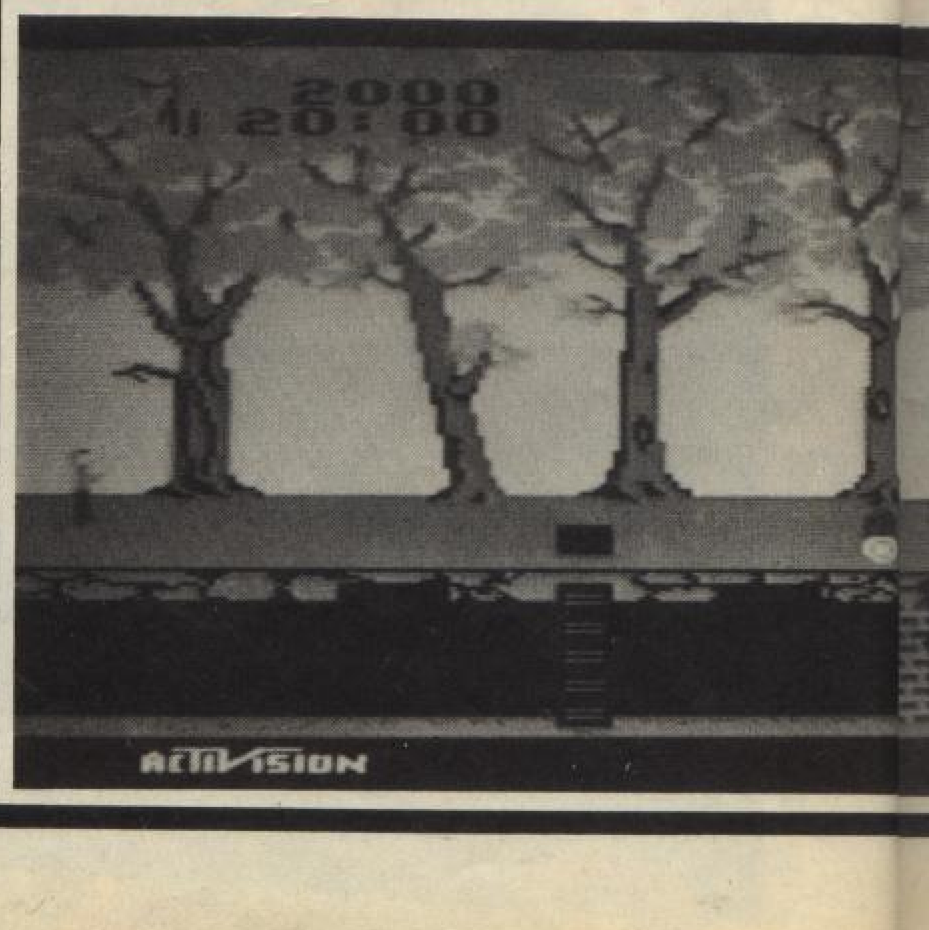
So you want to write a game and don't know where to start? Why not try programming your fast action shoot em up in BASIC? No? A compiler would speed things up wouldn't it? Not much. Oh well, looks like you'll have to learn machine code . . .

Then again if you find the thought of programming totally repulsive, you could always use one of those games designer thingies — Mirrorsoft's *Game Creator* for example? Hmm. Written by David and Richard Darling (authors of many early Mastertronic classics), *Games Creator* was a program that enabled the user to 'build' games by means of simple 'building blocks'. In other words the essential elements of a game, such as graphics, sound and in fact the basics of the program itself, could all be defined separately with individual utilities and brought together to give the finished product. Unfortunately while the idea was, and indeed is, quite strong, the results were on the whole, rather weak and it wasn't really possible to produce a game of any substance due to little flexibility within the system. Still it was a start.

So now where does that leave you? What about Activision's *Game Maker*? Although it's very much in the same vein as Mirrorsoft's *Games Creator*, it adopts a different, less restrictive approach. More importantly you can create stand alone programs, that is programs which run independently of *Game Maker*. Programming knowledge isn't required, but you do have to program as such. Don't be put off though — not a single command or listing needs to be typed in. No, *Game Maker* has its own 'programming' language and makes full use of an unusual 'icon' system. Those of you familiar with Garry Kitchen's previous offering, *The Designer's Pencil*, will recognise this system and know how easy it is to use and how well it works.

Down the right side of the screen there is a list of master commands and any one can be executed by simply selecting it with the joystick and pressing the fire button. Copious programming commands are stored behind the command window in the centre of the screen and are accessed in a similar manner. Despite the unusual nature of a majority of these commands, the language is as a whole, relatively easy to use — mainly due to the friendly app-

David Crane's classic PITFALL, adapted to the GAME MAKER by Dan Kitchen, Garry's brother.



roach of the comprehensive manual, although the fact that a majority of the commands are sufficiently self-explanatory does help.

To enable you to create graphics and sound for use within your *Game Maker* game there are four, easy to use programs provided. The first is **Scene Maker**, which is used to produce detailed background scenery. This drawing utility is one of the best I have seen and contains some superbly implemented features, such as an excellent **zoom** facility and the **undo** command. The former gives a magnified view of what you're drawing and is handy for applying fine detail, while the latter proves very useful should you make any errors. For instance, if you find you've unintentionally drawn a line straight through your otherwise perfect picture, you can rectify the situation by selecting the undo command which promptly erases the mistake, leaving your picture intact. The **circle**, **box** and **line** commands draw their respective shapes on screen, but if you feel confident enough you can always draw free-hand. Any outstanding artistic endeavours can be saved out to disk for recall at a later date.

Sprite Maker is a highly competent program that lets you design any sprites you might need for your game. They can be single or multi-coloured, expanded in either or both directions, overlayed or 'stuck' together and so on. There is also the facility to animate the sprite through a series of frames.

A sprite is actually drawn with a joystick on the sprite drawing board, which dominates the left hand side of the screen and shows each dot close up as you draw it. To the right of this there is the sprite positioning window, which is where the sprite you are working on is displayed along with any others you wish to attach to it. Sprite Maker has many useful editing commands and is simple to use — results can be obtained quickly with minimal fuss and saved to disk for future use.

Sound in a *Game Maker* program can take two forms — sound effects or music. **Sound Maker** is used to create any necessary noises, while **Music Maker** is for those with a musical bent. The former is a wonderful piece of software which takes the form of a sort of sound effects 'mixing desk'. There are lots of sliders and knobs to fiddle with and after a little experimentation some interesting results can be achieved. All the various aspects of a sound effect can be adjusted or affected, such as the waveform and its properties, and filters can be used if so desired. The great thing about Sound Maker is that you don't need to know what you're doing, so long as the end results sound good. And thankfully most of the time they do.

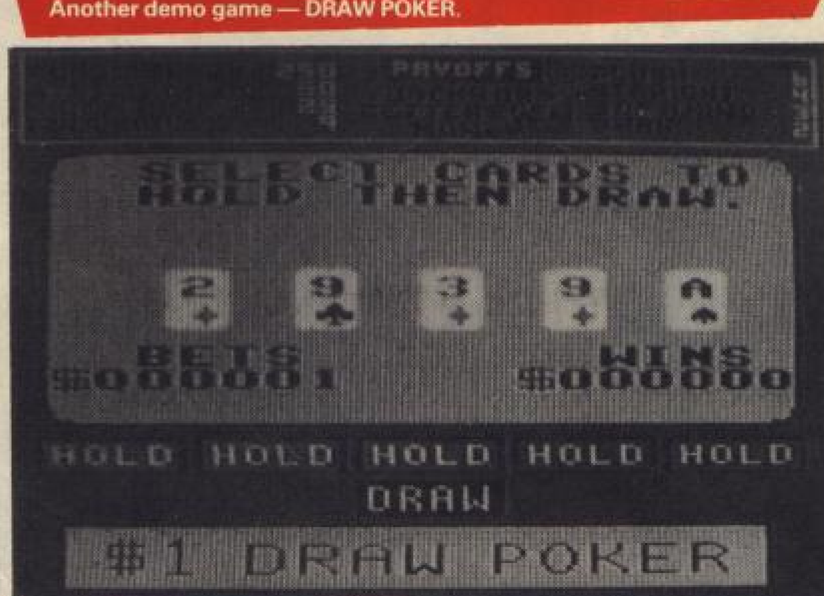
Finally, there's **Music Maker** which is used to create background or title screen music for a game. All three voices are at your disposal along with a number of different instruments. Notes are input on a music sheet which takes up most of the screen. As the notes are entered they are played on a representation of a keyboard at the top of the screen, so you know roughly how your tune is sounding. When you're happy with your composition it can be played back in full and saved to disk if you so desire. Even those lacking in musical talent, such as myself, can achieve reasonable results with relative ease and speed.

Once all the necessary decorative elements of a game have been finalised, they can be brought together and used with your program. Supplied with the package there are some excellent examples of what can be achieved with *Game Maker* and a little thought. For example the Activision classics *Pitfall!* and *Mega Mania* have been faithfully reproduced, especially the former. Other demonstrations include an animated birthday greeting card, a draw poker game, a couple of animated Christmas cards and some nifty graphics displays with balls and lines.

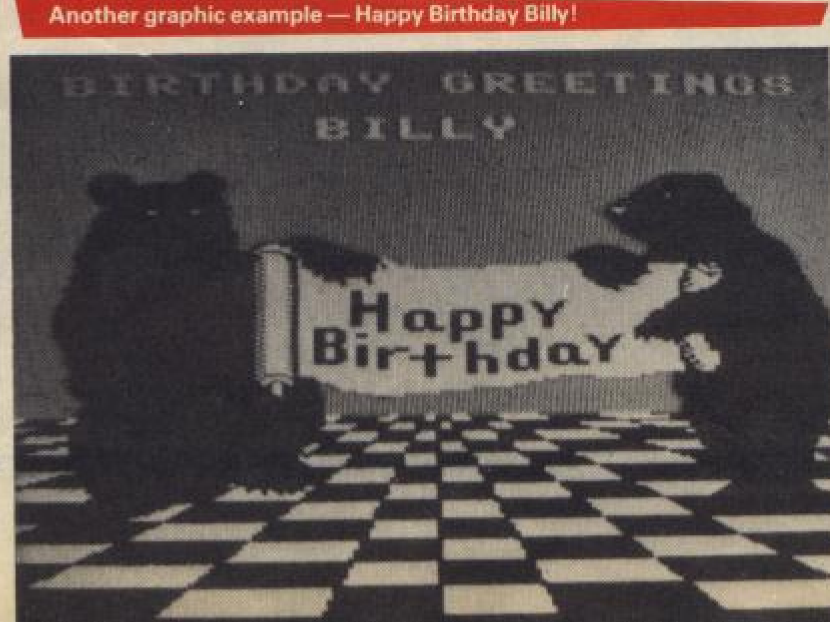
A graphic example — the Christmas Card.



Another demo game — DRAW POKER.



Another graphic example — Happy Birthday Billy!





An example game — MEGA MANIA.



Between phone calls I knocked up this piccie of Squiffy the Bear.

CONCLUSIONS . . .

As a programming tool *Game Maker* isn't overly impressive and if you want to write best selling blockbusters, then definitely steer well clear, since the facilities just don't exist. However, if you are after a piece of software to entertain then *Game Maker* is certainly worthy of consideration. It isn't too hard to use and some pleasing and often surprising results can be obtained quite quickly. I found it more useful for drawing pictures with Scene Maker and writing demonstration programs rather than games, and would recommend it purely on that basis. The fact that simple games can also be written is an added bonus. The title *Game Maker* is perhaps a bit misleading, but nevertheless this is a excellent package and an enjoyable way of messing around with your Commodore's capabilities without the hassle.



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WIN A SIZZLER

ROBIN O' THE WOOD, from Odin

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NO. Lincoln Green is NOT the in colour for Designer Bogies in 1986. It's the colour that Robin of Sherwood and his band of merry outlaws used to die their cossies before they went on the rampage across film sets and TV Studios, robbing the poor to pay the rich. Or something like that.

Being an Outlaw can be a lot of fun. Feasting on venison, chatting up pretty maids and duffing in fat, rich old bishops. All this fuss about Inner City Crime nowadays is really a bit daft — Robin and his lot were busily mugging folks hundreds of years ago. Only problem they had, was that no one had built any Inner Cities and they had to sproing around foresty bits all the time.

Replace the SPG with the Sheriff's Norman soldiers, and there you have it. A crime scenario which is as old as the hills. Or trees if you like.

Mind you, Robin and his lot were a bit more altruistic. They didn't just rob folks for amusement or personal gain — oh no, they gave it all away. Outlaws in those days had to take the place of the DHSS. Quite an interesting little set of theories I've suddenly come up with here. I'm off to the the Minion's University to get approval for my PhD in 'The Roots of Urban Crime and the Foundation of the Social Security System in Medieaval England' while you try and win one of the twenty five copies of *Robin O' the Wood* that Odin Computer Graphics have stumped up as prizes in this comp.

Oli's drawn a couple of versions of a woodland scene featuring the band of Merrie Men — ring round the differences in the second one, complete the coupon underneath with your name and address and whizz the lot off to ROBIN COMP, ZZAP!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB to arrive by 13th March.

Right, now how exactly do you spell 'mediaevail' . . . ? hmmm.







Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

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EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN

If a wargame is seen as a vehicle for the accurate simulation of events, it needs to assimilate certain details. In a game where artillery plays a part, rate of fire (ROF), and burst radius have to be accurately measured if the consequences of being caught in the beaten zone are to be realistic. On a more general level, consider logistics. Soldiers cannot march without food or fight without ammunition. All these factors should be considered in a good wargame. But, without the power of a mainframe, there also have to be limitations.

How likely is it that a Scorpion Recon vehicle would lose its tracks when doing over 60mph? What would the consequences for the commander be if he had the turret hatch open? Such things invariably happen in large mobilisations of forces simply because of the probability levels and occasionally the consequences from these incidents will have considerable effect. But even with a game running over half a dozen disks, if the scale of the wargame used company or larger sized units, such computations would make the game unwieldy and unbearably slow to play.

Even in the biggest simulations, there are inaccuracies or vague areas that would lead me to doubt their conclusions to some extent. The Soviet armies are plagued by discipline problems and are uncertain as to how far some of their 'allies' will support them. The NATO forces lack standardisation in so many important areas, such as ammunition. Although the critics are dismissive about the abilities of China's conventional forces, how well would they fight under pressure — and on who's side, if anybody's?

What happens when the terrorists get hold of the nukes?

Although no single game could deal with all the possible situations, a series of games could handle most of them. Fortunately, so many wargames are brought out, the wargamer always has a choice of scenarios to examine the effects of certain limited possibilities. SSI, American strategists extrordinare, have created a series of episodic games dealing with the subject of nuclear war in the Northern hemisphere called *When Superpowers Collide*. This month I'm going to look at part of this range. And show you just what computer wargaming can offer. But first . . .

KAISER

Ariolasoft, £7.95 cass, £9.95 disk, joystick

Kaiser involves from one to nine players competing against fate or each other to become Emperor of 18th century Germany. Each player begins life as a Regent equipped with assets and an estate, which must grow and prosper in order to bring success. The ultimate goal is to build five towns (consisting of five markets and three grain mills), possess at least 25000 hectares of land and have cash assets of 100000 Talers. Lastly, a palace and cathedral must be built. Not only names but gender are required as this becomes relevant to the player's title. The game takes place in a series of phases which combine to make a yearly turn. During the turn, all options and responses are made via the joystick.

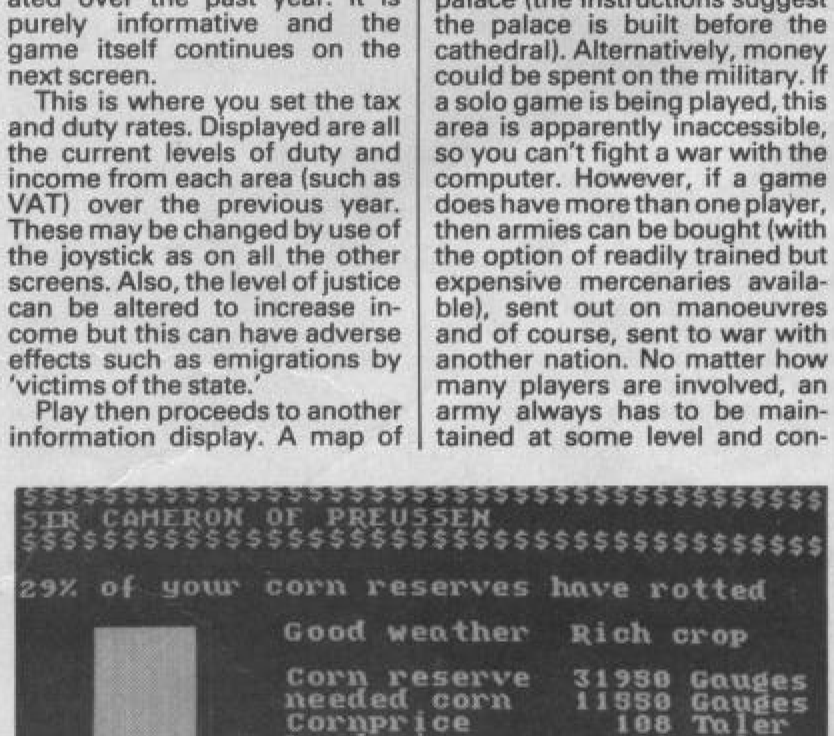
During the first phase, a harvest report arrives and must be dealt with. If the crop has been poor then extra supplies of grain need to be purchased unless you want the population to die. If the harvest has been a bumper one, surplus grain may be sold off at a profit. The option to buy or sell land is also there for consideration. Selling land can bring extra income (if sale prices are judged well). Buying land is also necessary in order to build a palace and cathedral — both of which are required as status symbols during the game.

The next stage of the game is simply a status screen allowing you to study data on birth rate, death rate, revenue from markets and grain mills, army costs and how many people emigrated over the past year. It is purely informative and the game itself continues on the next screen.

This is where you set the tax and duty rates. Displayed are all the current levels of duty and income from each area (such as VAT) over the previous year. These may be changed by use of the joystick as on all the other screens. Also, the level of justice can be altered to increase income but this can have adverse effects such as emigrations by 'victims of the state.'

Play then proceeds to another information display. A map of your estate is drawn each year showing how many markets exist, how many mills are producing corn, how far building of the palace and cathedral have progressed and size of the army. The map may be scrolled, rather crudely across the screen. The diagramatic information displayed on the map is clear and useful but rather unambitious on the visual side. Again, after study the next stage of the game may be accessed.

With this year's revenue displayed at the top of the screen, there is now the option to decide how to spend it. New mills and markets are the cheapest form of expenditure as they bring in an income from the next turn onwards. On the other hand a start could be made building the palace (the instructions suggest the palace is built before the cathedral). Alternatively, money could be spent on the military. If a solo game is being played, this area is apparently inaccessible, so you can't fight a war with the computer. However, if a game does have more than one player, then armies can be bought (with the option of readily trained but expensive mercenaries available), sent out on manoeuvres and of course, sent to war with another nation. No matter how many players are involved, an army always has to be maintained at some level and con-





sequently, is always a financial burden.

Once an army goes to war, a whole new game appears. Again it is totally joystick oriented and through a series of prompts, forces may be deployed or put into action — whatever you require. Throughout a battle and at the end of the war, details of losses are made available. Fighting wars is definitely a costly business in terms of manpower but it will drastically increase the amount of land owned if successful.

After military matters have been resolved, the game returns to the first phase one year on. However, if the turn has been a particularly good one, a new rank in the aristocracy will be given to you with the trapping of extra land that comes with it. On a more sombre note, the computer may decide you have gracefully passed away due to old age. This is the singular major random factor in the game. Automatically set at the start of the game, it is the same for all players but there is no way of knowing when it will occur. The only thing that can aid you to a long life is the speed at which each turn is dealt with. The game contains a monitoring system which calculates how quickly different matters are dealt with and then determines your health.

The game is more like a computer version of diplomacy in miniature than a simulation but there is a great deal of strategy involved. It could prove to be frustrating however. More than once I thought my progress was good — only to be stopped in my tracks by the grim reaper himself. But maybe I was just unlucky. The war game is rather simple in terms of complexity but adds satisfying depth to an already subtlely demanding game. One good feature is the ability to access a status screen to examine how good your performance is. My only real gripe lies in the inability to fight wars against the computer. Definitely the kind of game that gets better with more players.

Presentation 68%
Neatly packaged with well defined options.

Graphics 45%
Simple but effective.

Instructions 60%
A pity more atmosphere wasn't generated here. It might have made playing the game more interesting.

Authenticity 40%
The game isn't really a simulation but the effects of a bad harvest are fairly well handled.

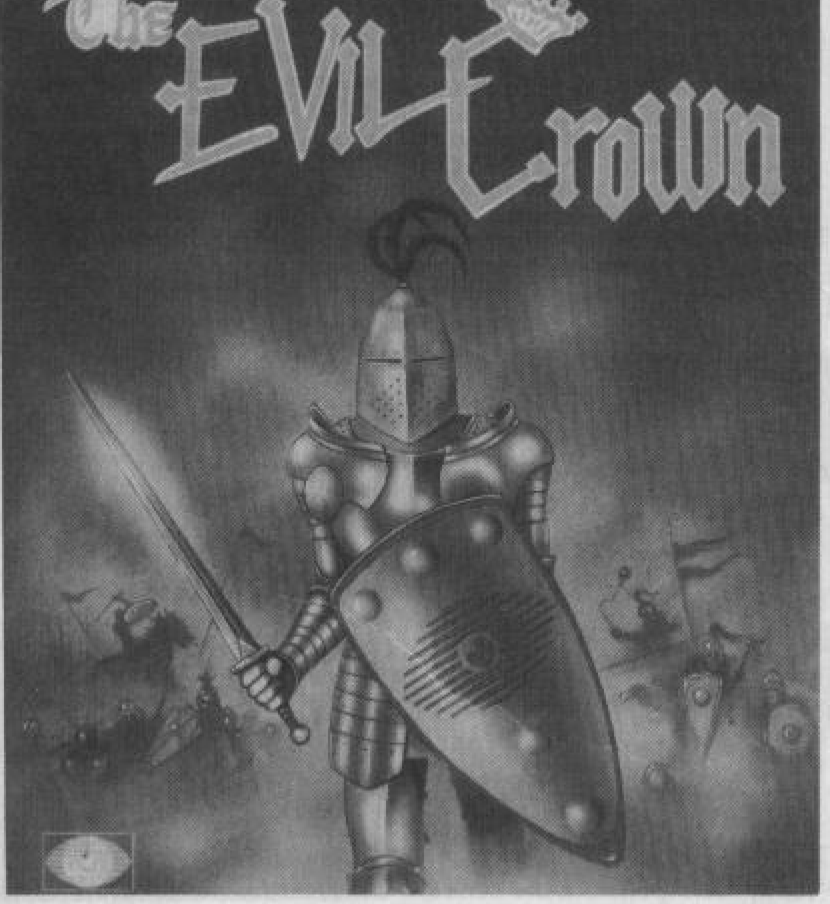
Playability 66%
Once you get into the motions it's quite addictive. More playable with more people.

Value for money 72%
Attractively priced compared to other offerings.

Overall 61%
Not bad at all. But unless there are other people around willing to play, you're going to find interest slacking — eventually.

THE EVIL CROWN

Producer: Mind Games (Argus Press Software), £9.99, joystick and keys

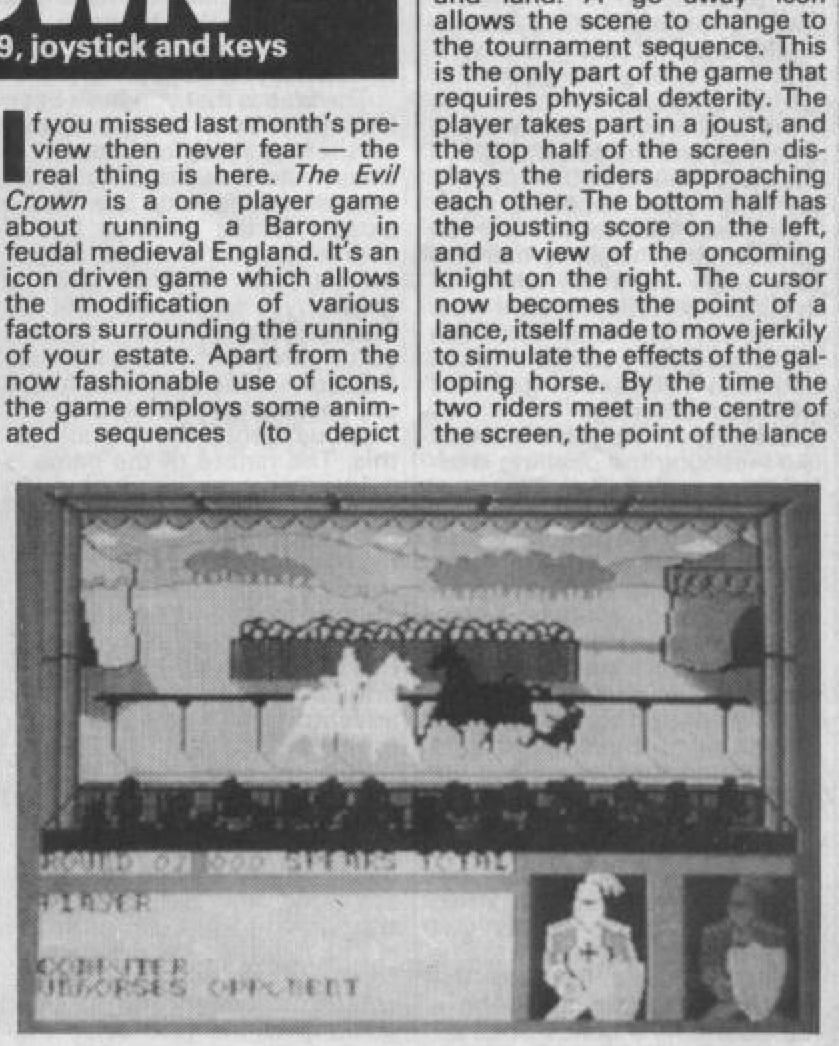


If you missed last month's preview then never fear — the real thing is here. *The Evil Crown* is a one player game about running a Barony in feudal medieval England. It's an icon driven game which allows the modification of various factors surrounding the running of your estate. Apart from the now fashionable use of icons, the game employs some animated sequences (to depict battles and revolts) and a redesigned character set adds atmosphere to the game.

The main screen is split into two halves. On the left is an overhead view of the fields worked on by the peasantry. The cultivated areas are highlighted against the forest region. If the harvests are not too good, it's possible to select new areas for farming, using an arrow cursor. To the right of the screen are nine main icons which allow you to alter the tax rate, alter the toll rate for passing traders; pay scutage to the king (to avoid having to send your militia into battle for him); modify the size of the militia; give food hand outs (if the peasants are particularly poor); spend money on tournaments; check your progress; continue to the next stage of the game and quit. These icons have been greatly improved on the final version. They are now colourful and detailed.

The idea is that from the first year (1156), the estate has to be managed in yearly turns. By maintaining the right balance of taxes and forces and proving yourself in the annual tournaments. The main strategy elements are apparent in the first part of the game where the allocation of available resources is planned. The option to continue is then selected.

The first part of this section shows a repetitive sequence of animals wandering through the forest. The more creatures, the less efficient the use of labour and land. A 'go away' icon allows the scene to change to the tournament sequence. This is the only part of the game that requires physical dexterity. The player takes part in a joust, and the top half of the screen displays the riders approaching each other. The bottom half has the jousting score on the left, and a view of the oncoming knight on the right. The cursor now becomes the point of a lance, itself made to move jerkily to simulate the effects of the galloping horse. By the time the two riders meet in the centre of the screen, the point of the lance



must have been guided into a position that will result in a strike against the opponent. Enough successful passes and the tournament will be won. This section is particularly difficult to master, however, so practice will be necessary.

Whatever the outcome of the tournament, the next stage of the game deals with any battles and/or revolts by the peasantry that have to be resolved. Another option, to pay the militia for their participation in these events, is provided. A simplified graphic sequence showing a couple of figures in combat is used to convey the result. The colour of the figures also reflects how large the battle is. Assuming you are not totally defeated at this point, the next screen shows the harvest result. The greater the harvest the more efficient the labour force and use of land. Random elements like the effects of weather are accounted for by animated clouds covering the sun. If all is well at this point, the game progresses to the next year and the cycle begins again.

Last month, I said it was too early to tell whether the final implementation on the Commodore would be any good as I had only seen a finished Spectrum version. The Commodore version has improved graphics which add greatly to the aesthetic appeal of the game.

In fact the game is quite enjoyable. What it doesn't provide is an accurate simulation of running a medieval barony. On the other hand, it does provide an interesting vehicle for strategy with a small arcade element in the jousting sequence. The portrayal of uprisings and wars are probably the biggest let down. The simple graphics display of a couple of sprites trying to chase each other off the edge of the screen is really unnecessary and unimpressive. But there is enough game material there to provide the player with a refreshing change from the usual offerings.

Presentation 77%
The icons work quickly and make interaction quite fast.

Graphics 76%
Colourful with limited but reasonable animation.

Instructions 61%
Not as good as they could have been. Examples of play are useful for this kind of game. There weren't any.

Authenticity 51%
There are some rough guidelines. Jousting is tricky and painful . . .

Playability 66%
Very easy to get into.

Value for money 79%
A good price for a well designed game.

Overall 80%
An intriguing and enjoyable game.



"I SOMETIMES THINK I'M A BIT OF ALTERNATE REALITY..."

ALTERNATE REALITY

Datasoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

Alternate Reality — The City is the title of Datasoft's 'ultimate role play ing game' if you are to believe the immodest label on the front of the package. It certainly is big. Two double sided disks contain all the data necessary to play. If that isn't enough, another disk (yours, of course) can be used to store a character permanently. Once beyond the packaging and the disks there are other goodies to whet your appetite. Apart from an excellently printed guidebook to the game, there's a four page summary sheet of available commands an a map of the city. The latter has been left largely blank so that you can add to it information gathered whilst adventuring.

Loading up the game is rather like watching the opening credits for a major film. The impression is one of zooming through a starfield at incredible speeds while the titles (and full credits) laboriously go where none have gone before. The character set is superb, starfield effective and silence imposing but there should really have been an option to get past this section rather than be forced to sit through the pretentious sequence over and over again. Once the title sequence has finished, there's a feast for the eyes in the form of some very detailed and immaculately drawn opening graphics. Finally you stand before the gateway to The City of Xebec's Demise. The view is really stunning. Above the doorway, a series of counters spin numbers at varying speeds. These correspond to the physical and mental characteristics that will determine your limitations and strengths in the game to come. The moment you pass through the doorway, the numbers freeze and you're stuck with what you've got.

The idea is that you have been kidnapped by an alien spaceship and left to fend for yourself in this mysterious city. The safest areas of this city are those closest to the gateway but of course if you risk more distant travels, the rewards will be greater. A few areas will be inaccessible no matter how hard you try to enter. This is because Datasoft intend to release future expansions to the game. I'm dubious about the wisdom of this. The nature of the game is evidently complex right from the beginning. If their is a plot to get into, rather than just a setting for free form adventuring, then it's going to be hard to find. This means that there's really very little way of telling whether there is a complete scenario or only a beginning to a bigger adventure. Only time will tell, as they say.

To begin with, you have a little money. This should be used wisely to equip yourself for likely adventures. The city has been well designed and there are good and bad dealers so shopping around and haggling are useful. If and when success comes your way, new attire could be bought to fit your station, as the rule book suggests. It won't help you complete the game but it's an atmospheric touch. Currency is handled in gold silver and copper. It's also the only form of treasure which cannot be cursed or magical. There are gems and other treasures to be found but they could either be worth more than they seem or be fatal lures.

Encounters are frequent also. The rules booklet lists the different type of characters and creatures likely to be encountered. These range from different classes of citizen who may be benign or otherwise or even legendary creatures of the night who are best avoided.

Taverns and inns also abound. They have more uses than supplying refreshment. Clues to potential adventures may lie hidden in the lyrics of an overheard song, for instance. On the other hand, it is possible to get merrily drunk and this does actually have an adverse affect on the character's abilities whilst he is under the influence. Another place to go for help and clues is a Guild building. The city has various guilds to support the varying adventurers' professions. For a fee, you could be rid of an unwanted, cursed weapon. Healers are also useful. Many of the claws and teeth of more vicious creatures are coated in strong poisons which only Healers can cure.

As far as exploration goes, the city is riddled with secret passages and 'one way walls' leading to unknown locations. When (or if) the expansions are added, there will be dungeon complexes, a palace, an arena and a wilderness to explore.

Earning money is going to be necessary for a character to survive and this is possible in several ways. Money may be found as the result of a fight, the result of an adventure or by placing money already possessed into a bank account. There is plenty of variation in the interest rates offered by different banks. However, the higher the interest rate, the more dangerous it is to invest the money. The choice is yours.

Many of the best role playing conventions are employed in this game but it definitely has drawbacks. The frequency of disk changes whilst playing and the waiting they cause, not only make the whole process long winded and frustratingly slow. Sometimes the reasons for these disk changes cannot be fathomed out, leaving you to wonder whether the program is as well designed as it could have been. The disk changes cripple the atmosphere and playability severely. Otherwise this could have been a fascinating game. It's as if presentation took precedence over game design — it shows.

Presentation 88%
The opening is totally OTT — but beautifully designed nonetheless.

Graphics 86%
The graphics too have been thoughtfully designed and exquisitely drawn.

Instructions 59%
Look wonderful but supply little more than the most basic information.

Authenticity 66%
Would have made an excellent RPG if it were not for the fact that most of the game's true strong points lie in the aesthetics rather than in good game play.

Playability 33%
Crippled by the inefficient layout of the game over the disks.

Value for money 77%
Reasonably priced for the size of the game — the quality is questionable.

Overall 48%
Despite initial attractions, the game is ultimately unplayable.

FROM A MEDIEVAL MILIEU TO APOCALYPSE NOW

This part of the column is devoted to a couple of impending releases from US Gold. Over the next couple of months a total of ten role playing and war games will be reviewed. However, at the time of writing there is little information pertaining to the price, format and release dates of these games. Stay tuned. All the relevant information will appear in these pages just as soon as it is available.

For several years now, Strategic Simulations Incorporated have dominated the strategy market in the USA. Until now, their games have only been available as expensive imports from a few suppliers. Now US Gold are set to release several of these state of the art games in the UK. After a good deal of time spent phoning the powers that be, a box full of games arrived at ZZAP! towers on a miserable and wet Thursday morning. It was like Christmas all over again — enough strategy and role playing games to keep me busy for months! I could see the next few days being very busy indeed. Here are the results of my findings.

PHANTASIE

Several companies have tried to produce advanced role playing sagas for home micros. The *Ultima* series constitutes one of the success stories. In a more limited way, a game which successfully employs a lot of role playing features is *The Temple of Apshai* trilogy. SSI's *Phantasie* uses a fantasy world called the Isle of Gelnor. From an old storyteller, you hear of the evil Black Knights and their terrible leader, the sorcerer Nikademus. Deciding that defeating this evil force would be a good way to earn fame and fortune, you set out to put together a party of like minded adventurers.

The game has mixed graphic and text displays for everything. All the options are accessible via the joystick or keyboard. The first thing to do after the game has loaded is to create a band of adventurers to aid you on your quest. This entails going to the local inn — the traditional recruiting ground in role playing games. The game allows the generation of practically any kind of party you require. The first stage in this process is to decide the race of the character to be developed. These include Human, Elf, Dwarf, Halfling and Gnome. Then the class or profession of the character can be decided. This can be Thief, Fighter, Ranger, Monk, Priest or Wizard.

Each character also has a series of mental and physical characteristics expressed as numerical values which affect the probability of success by that character in various activities. Therefore a Thief would do well to have a high dexterity level if he or she is to be successful when picking locks or even someone else's pocket.

Naturally each character can carry an certain number of weapons to defend itself. These are obtained by moving the group to armoury and highlighting the character you wish to do the 'shopping'. Once you feel a character is well enough equipped you can use the 'another shopper' command to fit out another character. There are plenty of weapons at the armoury including swords, flails, spears, maces and pitchforks. Once your merry band are fully geared you can take them back to the inn.

The inn plays an important part in the game and apart from being a place where characters can rest is the only location where those characters may distribute and sell items. The town also has a bank where you can withdraw or deposit gold pieces — useful, gold's heavy stuff and not really the sort of thing that should be carried around a rather violent land. If you want to get your score highlighted, select the 'mystic' option and it will be shown.

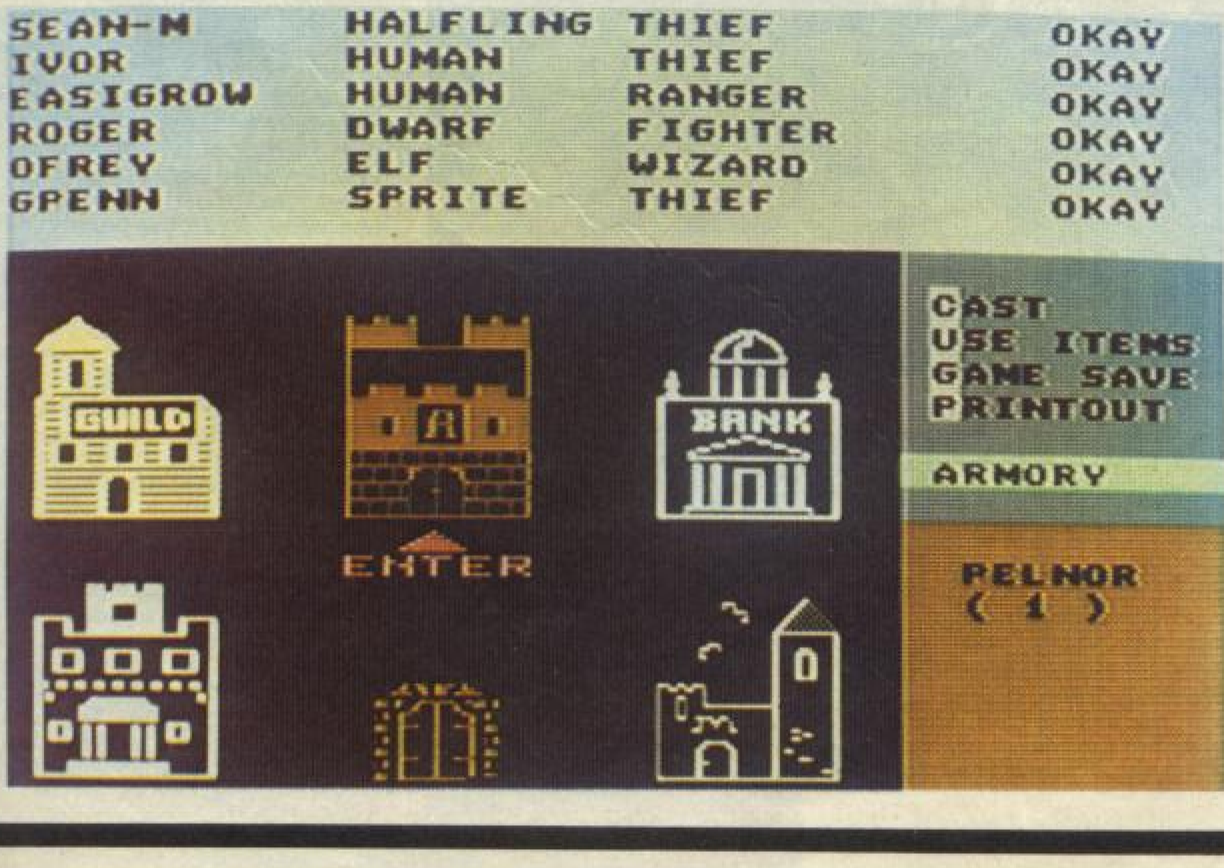


Selecting mystic also gives the overall strength of the party.

When the party is equipped and ready to go on their travels an option to leave the city is selected. The screen display changes to a pictorial view of a wilderness area. This area is several times larger than the screen itself and a small display in the bottom right corner of the screen reveals whereabouts in the overall world the party is situated. There are occasional random encounters in the wilderness, another feature lifted straight from conventional RPGs. Some of these encounters involve none too pleasant creatures, other times None player characters may be encountered for better or worse.

Whilst moving through the countryside, a kind of sparse narration takes place in a small window at the top of the screen. Eventually, the party is likely to come across a dungeon and more often than not will want to explore it. Entering and leaving dungeons are the only times when the disk needs to be changed over. Once the dungeon has been entered, the screen becomes a solid grey area containing a hidden map. The more the party experiment and explore, the more of the map is revealed to the group. Again the narration appears at the top of the map. Should the player want to examine something they encounter, that option is open to them — but more often than not it's just scenery.

This is where characters' abilities really come into their own. Thieves can help spot and diffuse traps, although one of



their best abilities in conventional role playing is their usefulness as advanced scouts for the party. This is not possible due to the inherent complexities involved but this is no great shame. If any rather nasty creatures are encountered (and they have a tendency to exist in the plural), the party can flee, fight or attempt to communicate. Normally fighting will be the only fruitful course of action. Interestingly, each member of the party can choose his own fighting strategy. Combat is handled in turns during which hits inflicted on creatures or adventurers are monitored. At the end of each turn either the whole party or individual members thereof may adopt a new strategy.

The only problem with this system is that it is quite possible to continue fighting, and even be wounded by a dead creature. On winning a fight against a nasty, I accidentally selected the fight option and was immediately plunged into a battle with the corpse of a giant snake. This did not stop the computer from killing off my party's only magician! He was fairly useless as I could not get him to use spells in combat, but it's still a pretty mean thing to do. I suppose SSI are just poor losers . . .

On the subject of dead magicians, although ZZAP, my party's illusionist extrordinaire, had been so cruelly killed off, when I eventually returned to the inn to distribute the wealth accumulated during the first adventure, I was asked how much I would like to give to him. These are unfortunately clumsy and unwanted features of an otherwise imaginative and highly playable game. If care is taken, they should cause no problems but that's no excuse for them.

After a fight, assuming the party s still in one piece, the computer shows how many experience points have been earned by each character as a result of his actions. This way, when the party return to the city, they may opt to be trained. If they have earned enough experience points and pay a fee, experts in their field will teach them skills which will make the characters more powerful and useful in their next adventures. Probably a good deal of points will have to be earned before the party are ready for their greatest challenge — but that should provide some good adventures in the meantime.

It's so unfortunate that a couple of nasty bugs had to be present in the combat system. Games of this type do have limited appeal but this emulates solitary role playing so well, it really deserved to be neatened up more than it has been. It's impossible to tell just how much work will be required before the party can take on Nikademus. No doubt, if you're a role playing addict, it will be worth the wait.

Presentation 89%
Excellently packaged and displayed.

Graphics 82%
Very good for a game of this type.

Instructions 88%
Everything you needed to know about Gelnor but never dared ask.

Authenticity 87%
Very thorough RPG simulation.

Playability 83%
Much easier to get into if you're already used to the concept of role playing.

Overall 87%
Otherwise excellent game marred somewhat by careless combat implementation.

GERMANY 1985

SIZZLER



This is the first in SSI's episodic *When Superpowers Collide* series. Each module in the series examines in detail a hypothetical conflict between US and Soviet forces. In *Germany 1985* the idea is that Soviet forces have made their first hostile act against the NATO forces in West Germany's Southern Central region where American units constitute the main defensive force.

There are two scenarios. The first, Advance to Combat involves Russian and US forces of comparable strength as the race to establish a cohesive front line. Invasion is the second scenario which begins with Soviet airborne divisions landing behind NATO lines. Their mission is to block key roads and capture towns to prepare for the main advancing force. In both scenarios, the victory conditions are the same: the player controlling the greatest number of towns after a certain number of game turns is the winner.

One feature about SSI games is that they usually contain just about every play option you could possibly require. One or two player games are possible with the computer playing either side during solitaire play. Different levels of difficulty may be selected. The terrain features may be randomized. A hex system (scale: one mile per hex) is employed for movement. Movement speed of a given unit is inversely proportional to the number of enemy units that can see it. Smoke screens may be generated to cover either attacks or retreats. Air strikes and air superiority are taken into account and units may be hidden for limited intelligence at the player's option.

Controlling different units is simplicity itself. Pressing F1 puts the cursor on the nearest unit under your command. The unit may then be moved up to its full movement point allocation in any direction (barring the presence of natural obstacles) by further movement of the cursor. In the bottom right hand corner of the screen, markers are set up in a hexagon to show which directions the vehicle currently under the cursor can move. Also displayed inside the hexagon is the number of enemy units which have spotted you along with the enemy units sighted by you.

Units have several possible modes. Transport mode makes a unit easily and quickly movable but only over road or clear terrain and it also increases a unit's vulnerability. Defense mode means a unit is dug in to offer the most resistance and therefore cannot be moved. Other modes include Support, meaning the unit will assist any units involved in combat within three hexes; Normal, a unit's standard deployment mode; River, allowing units to cross water obstacles; Attack, enhanced combat mode which

also increases vulnerability to losses; Fire, which allows the employment of ranged weaponry and Reor, which allows the unit to refit to regain strength and efficiency. Changing mode is possible at any time during the movement phase but costs movement points to do so.

The order phase offers a wide variety of orders which may be given to a unit ranging from strategic movements to take advantage of terrain to delayed combat and opportunity fire at enemy targets. Artillery orders open up a whole range of possibility also. NATO forces have have self propelled artillery battalions whereas the Soviets have traditional artillery enhanced with Katyusha rocket launchers. Direct fire, support fire and opportunity fire are all possible and the different kinds of round are also selectable.

Air power plays a major part in the game. Air strikes may be called in to attack enemy units on their own or to assist a ground unit in its attack. Air superiority is determined by the computer based on the current scenario and each side's air activity during previous turns.

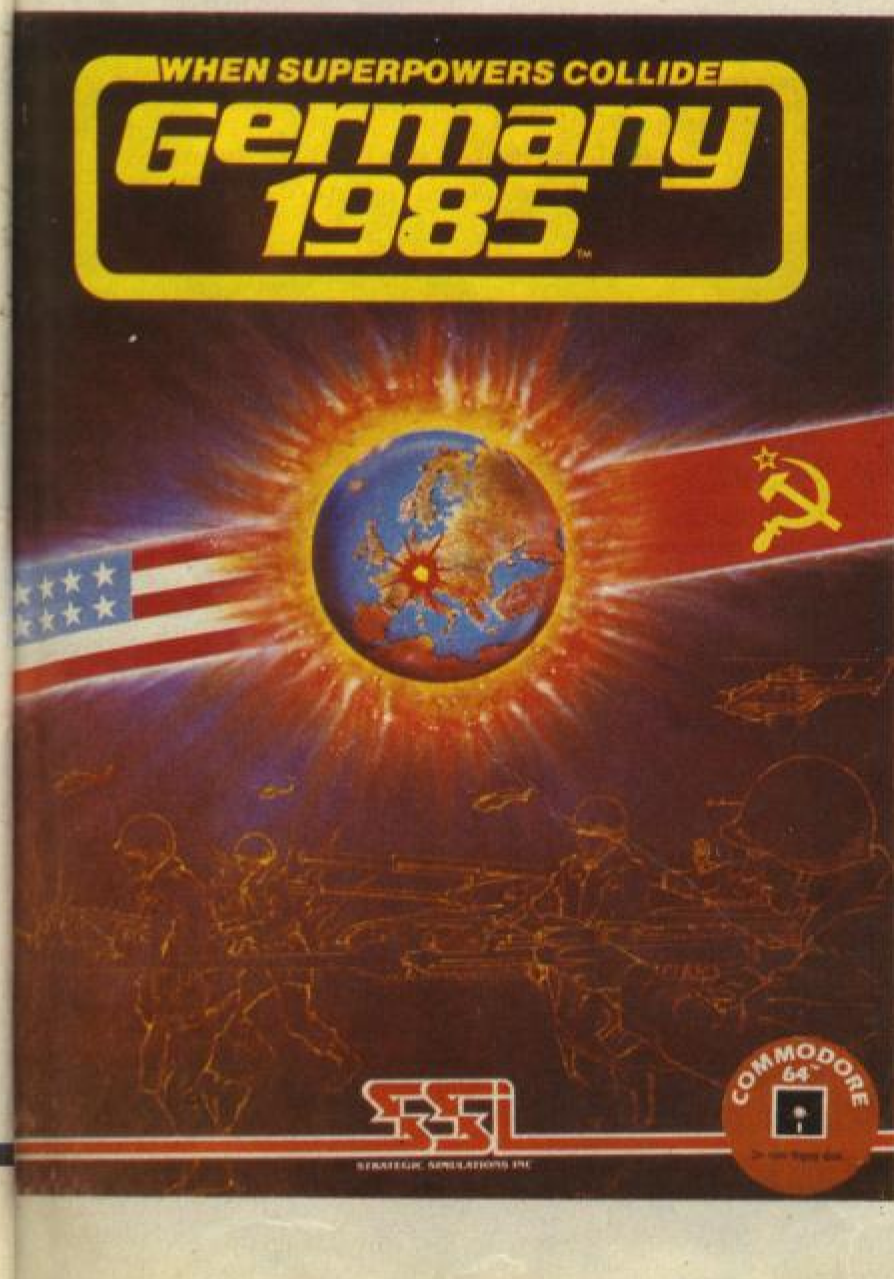
Combat is affected by as many factors as possible. This makes the combat sequences the most realistic I've come across in a tactical wargame. Yet the whole procedure is handled extremely quickly and it reveals the care, dedication and skill of the programmers responsible. The amount of information available on a given unit is really incredible. The game designers have packed in just about every conceivable consideration for a game on this scale. Although the scenarios are both non-nuclear, provision is made for the use of nuclear weapons in future scenarios using the same system.



Victory is difficult to achieve no matter which side you play. The logic used by the computer is very complex indeed. Although both sides are of comparable strength the different difficulty levels combined with the options on limited intelligence and different scenarios make this an extremely challenging game.

Once the basic rules have been assimilated, it is comparatively easy to play rapidly. There is of course, the option to save a game at any stage as the twenty three turns the game can last make playing it to a conclusion a rather lengthy process. I felt my efforts rewarded simply by acknowledging that if I lost at least the game itself wasn't at fault. It's excellently designed and highly playable. Advanced to Contact is a limited scenario in that it assumes neither side has any distinct advantage over the other for simplicity. It does serve as an excellent vehicle for testing the parameters of the game however. Invasion is the scenario you should aim to play as achieving a substantial victory here is extremely difficult. And the scenario itself is more realistic.

Next month, I'll be taking a close look at both *Norway 1985* and *RDF 1985*. Time did not permit playing either of them thoroughly enough for their inclusion this issue. If you are interested in the Superpowers series, remember that *Germany 1985* must be bought before the others at it's the only game which contains all the rules necessary for play. The others are only supplementary games. As an example of the confidence the game designers have in the series, all the tables and combat rules are included in full in an appendix. It would not take much to convert them to a highly playable set of conventional rules. All in all an excellent game.



Presentation 95%
The best rules book, map, and selection of play options I've seen on a strategy game.

Graphics 87%
I've seen better graphics but these are still neat and clear.

Instructions 98%
Impeccable.

Authenticity 84%
The chances of having two evenly matched forces in any area of West Germany are relatively low.

Playability 96%
The complex rules are sufficiently well explained to allow rapid implementation.

Overall 97%
Amongst the best ever SSI releases.

The limits of available space and time prevent me from examining the other role playing games this month, but be prepared for more in depth coverage next issue . . .

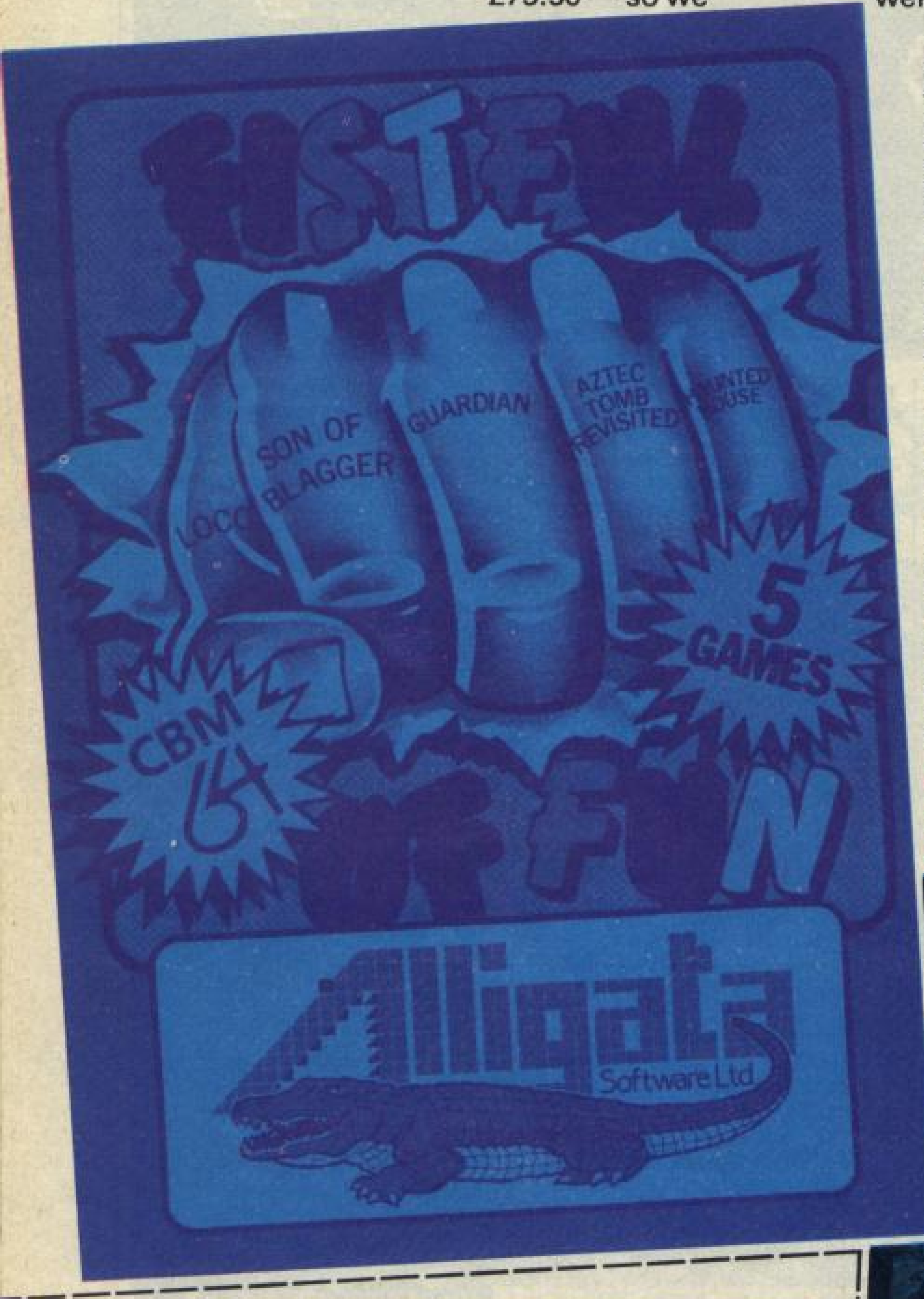
Q: How can you get your hands on £79 worth of software for only £6.95?

A: Grab a hold of this super ZZAP!/Alligata offer!!

A FISTFUL OF FUN WITH 10 CHARTBUSTERS!!

Okay, let's come clean! You can save **£3.05** by using the coupon at the bottom of the page. Alligata's twin pack compilation containing ten of their best known arcade games by Tony Crowther and Steve Evans normally retails at £10, but ZZAP! readers can get theirs for only **£6.95**. (It's true, though, that at their original prices, the collection would have set you back £79.50 — so we weren't really fibbing)!

So what's on offer? Take a look below . . .



LOCO
Inspired by an arcade game Tony Crowther once saw in Spain, this was destined to become a classic from the moment it arrived accompanied by a Jean Michel Jarre orientated sound track and rave reviews.

SON OF BLAGGER
The even classier sequel to Crowther's classic platformer, Blagger. This time the action's faster, more furious and scrolling to boot.

GUARDIAN
We won't waste space here — read the Past Blaster review on page 80 of this very issue!

AZTEC TOMB REVISITED
Arcade ace Crowther, deftly turns his hand to a graphical adventure.

HAUNTED HOUSE
Another early Crowther game with loads of Ghoulies in it and all the touches that makes Alligata arcade games what they are on the 64.

BLAGGER
Tony Crowther's classic platform game in which you must guide a Blagger (Burglar to you) around 30 screens of leaping action collecting keys and avoiding nasties along the way.

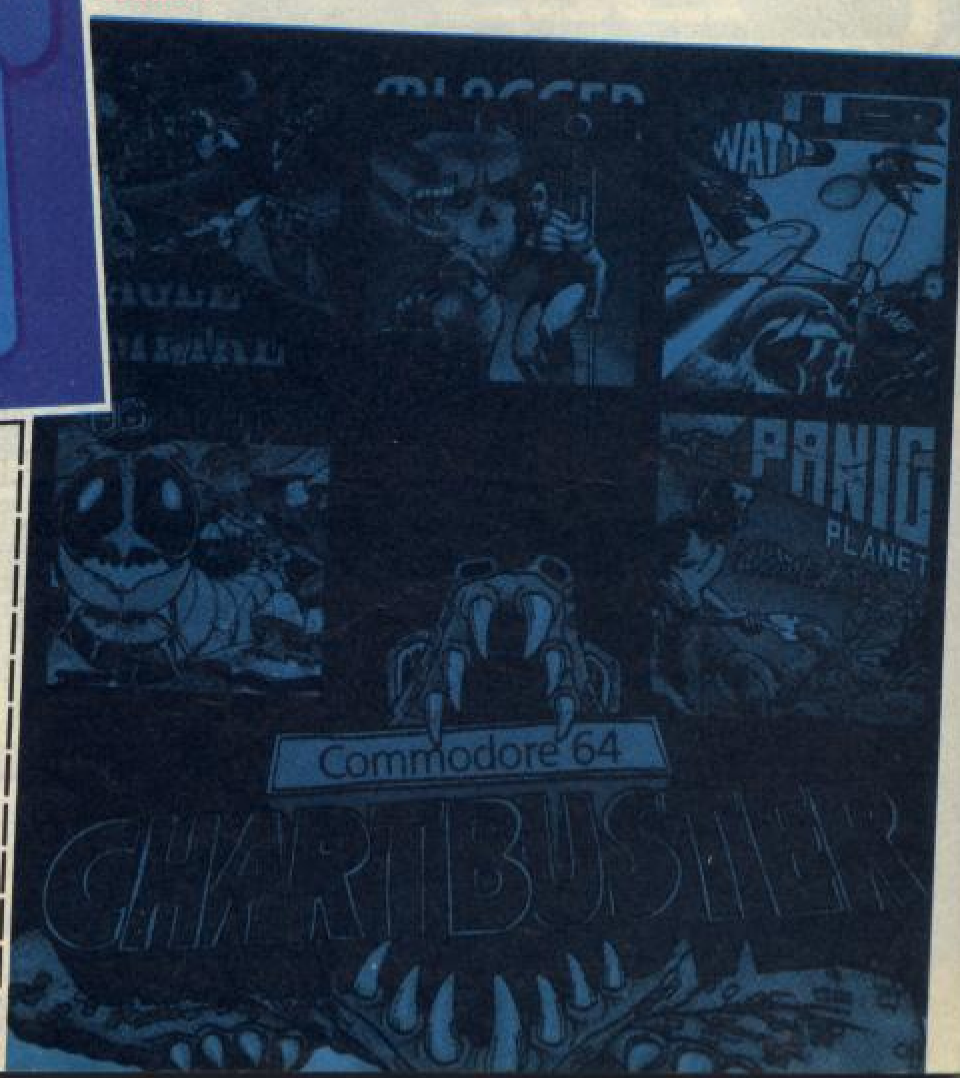
EAGLE EMPIRE
Steve Evans' near faultless version of that great arcade shoot em up, Phoenix. Kill everything that moves, and dodge everything that answers back!

KILLER WATT
Another Crowther classic, a two-way scrolling shoot em up based on a really weird scenario. Features light bulbs, eggs, dolphins, wales, ducks and just about everything except simple gameplay.

PANIC PLANET
Steve Evans' excellent version of the ever popular arcade game, Space Panic, has you furiously digging holes and bonking aliens on the head with your shovel in order to survive. Great!

BUGBLASTER
Whizzo adapation of the seminal arcade game, Centipede, which can only be described as early Crowther mayhem at its best!

All this for only £6.95, probably the best value around at the moment, and yours because you're a ZZAP! reader!



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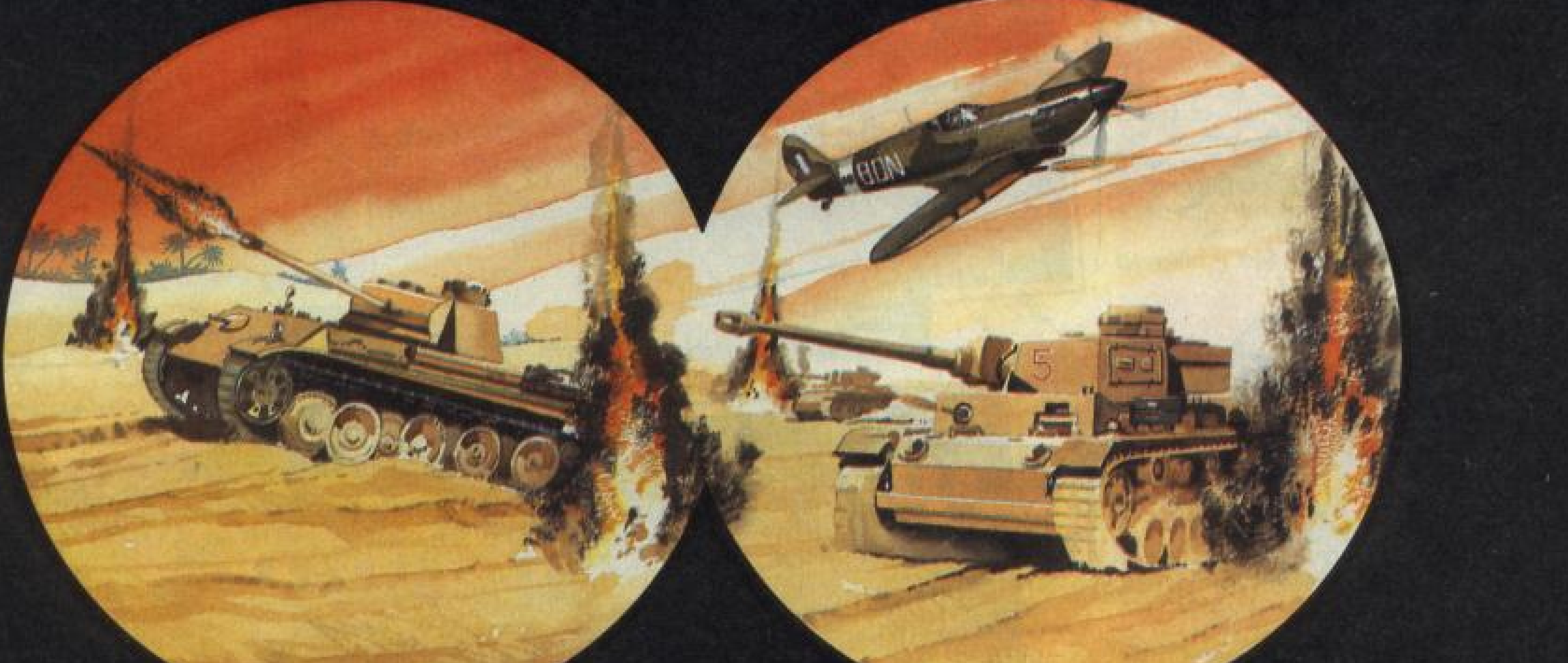
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A CUNNING FOE WHO KNOWS NO FEAR



DESERT FOX

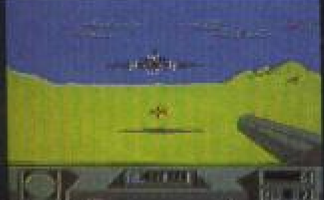


CBM64/128

The cunning Desert Fox, the wily Rommel, is on the rampage, sweeping across the desert sands, laying low the allied forces and swarming through allied territory. It is on your shoulders Lone Wolf, to halt the progress of this awesome foe and rescue the North Africa campaign from his grasp. Step forward with the courage of a fearless leader in face to face conflict with his ground and air attacks. Be as wise and as cautious as the most battle hardened general in planning your strategy and calculating your tactics to rescue your supply depots. In short Lone Wolf, if you fail in your destiny as the complete warrior, the final conflict – a head to head tank duel with the mighty Desert Fox himself – will be your last.

REALISTIC VOICE SIMULATION

Listen in on enemy radio messages, plan your tactics to combat their manoeuvres.



Stuka attack: Keep a close eye on your radar, an early warning will give you some chance against the enemy stuka attacks



Convoy: Protect your convoys from aerial bombardment at all costs, without their supplies your depots will fall. But in your eagerness watch out for the allied Spitfires.

U.S. GOLD
All American Software



Map: Be wise in your campaign strategy, protect those depots in danger from enemy forces, rally your firepower to it's most destructive effect.



Ambush: The valley is infested with enemy forces but no matter reach the other side you must. Good luck and happy shooting.

U.S. Gold Limited, Unit 10, Parkway Industrial Centre, Heneage Street, Birmingham B7 4LY. Telephone: 021-359 8881

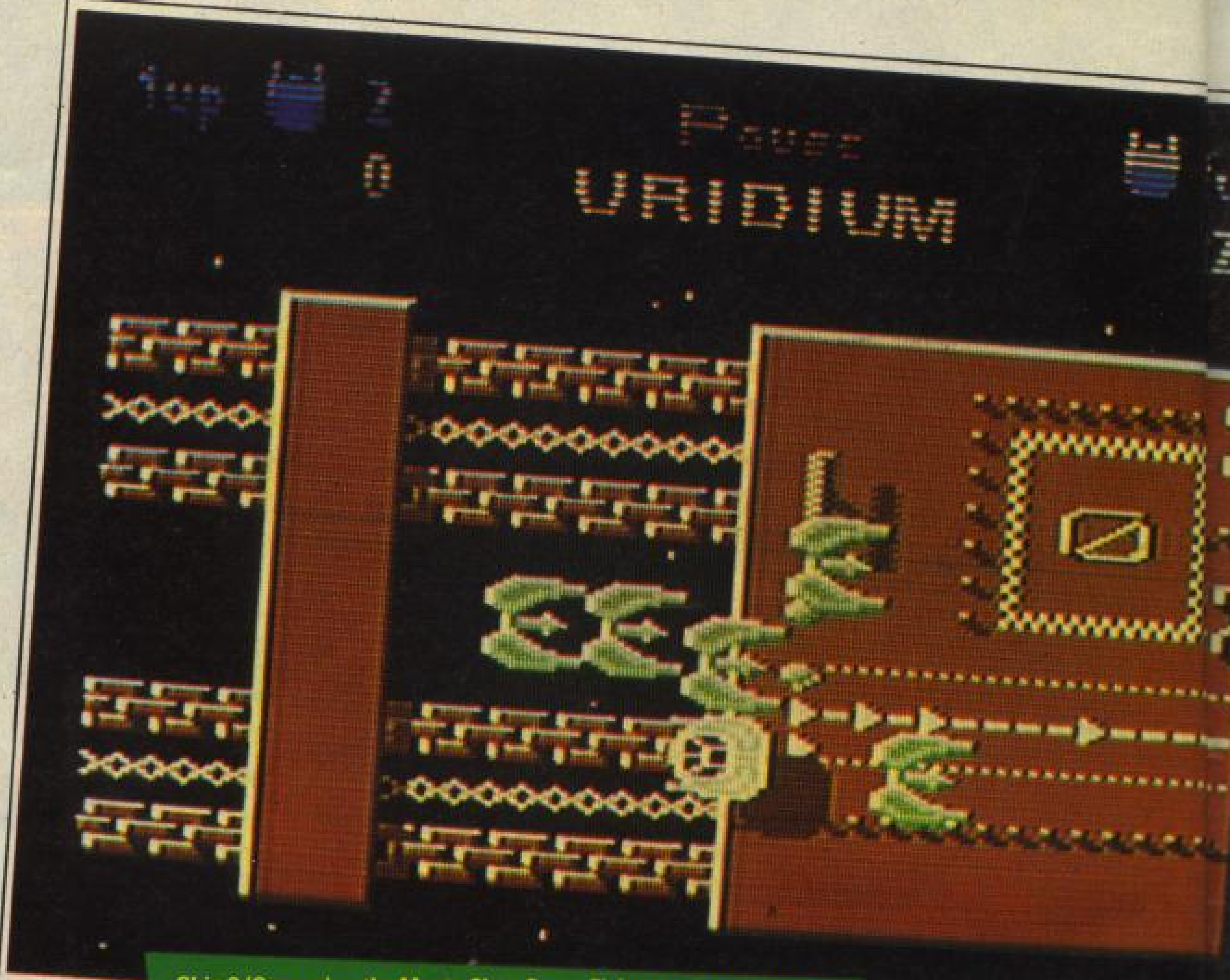
URIDIUM

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

'Emergency . . . Fleet of fifteen enemy Super-Dreadnoughts sighted . . . Entering this Galactic Sector . . . Now orbiting our planet . . . Draining planetary core of all mineral resources . . . Request assistance . . . We are under attack . . .'

Once again our Solar System is under the threat of extinction from an unknown enemy and once again it's up to you to prevent such a cataclysm. *Uridium, the follow up to Andrew Braybrook's previous offering Paradroid*, puts you in the pilot seat of the latest Manta class Space Fighter and straight into the action with a press of the fire button. Your objective is to destroy all fifteen Dreadnoughts by disrupting their interstellar power units, thus causing a chain reaction which eventually vapourises them. However, things are not so easy (are they ever?) since the enemy's defence systems must be successfully avoided, or disposed of if the situation arises, before you can land on the Dreadnought's master runway, enter the engine room and prime the ship destruction sequence.

Each Dreadnought is viewed



Ship 3 (Copper) — the Manta Class Space Fighter under pressure from the Dreadnought's defence system in the form of five aggressive alien craft just passing overhead.

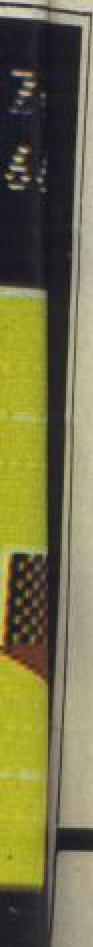


What an absolutely brilliant shoot em up! Uridium is surely the best arcade game yet to hit the 64. The game plays excellently, and the only niggling point is the fact that the playing area on each screen is a little small. The superlative graphics set new standards, and are truly arcade quality — some of the alien craft are superlative. If you want to bring a mini arcade machine to your 64 then trundle down to the shops, buy this and amaze yourself.

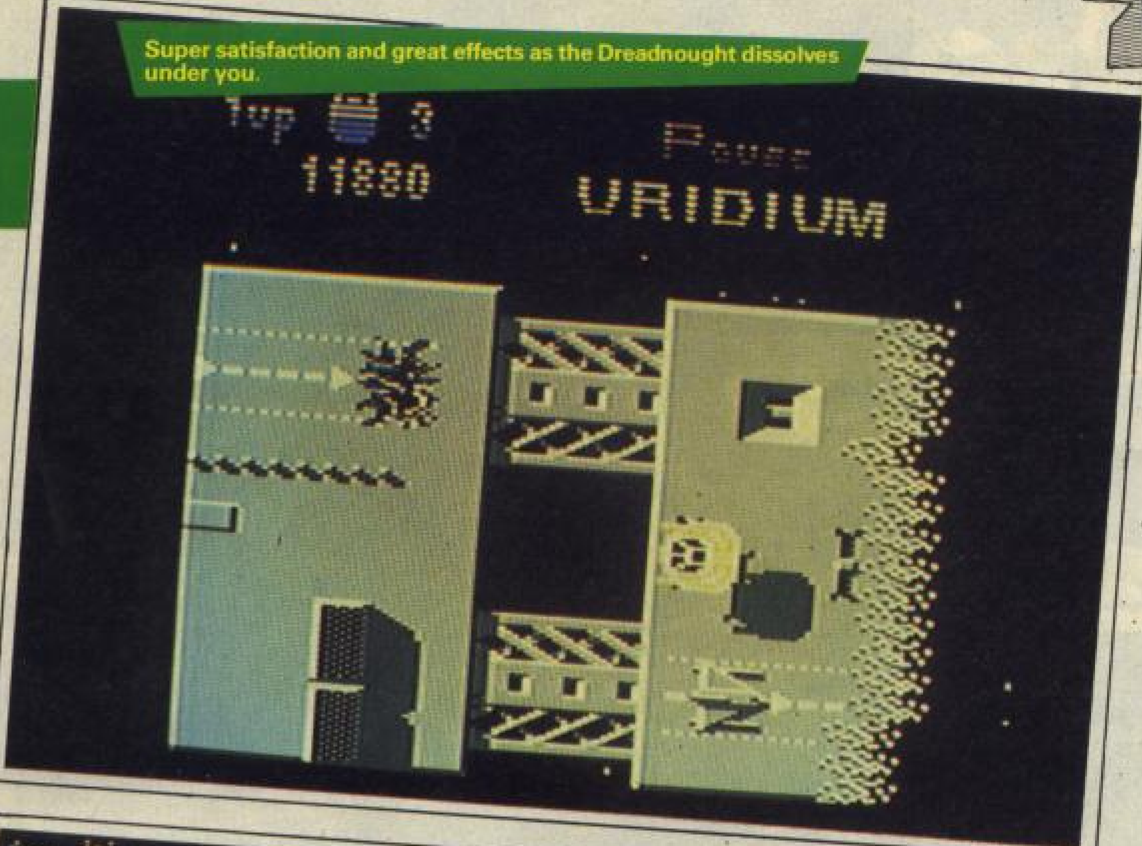


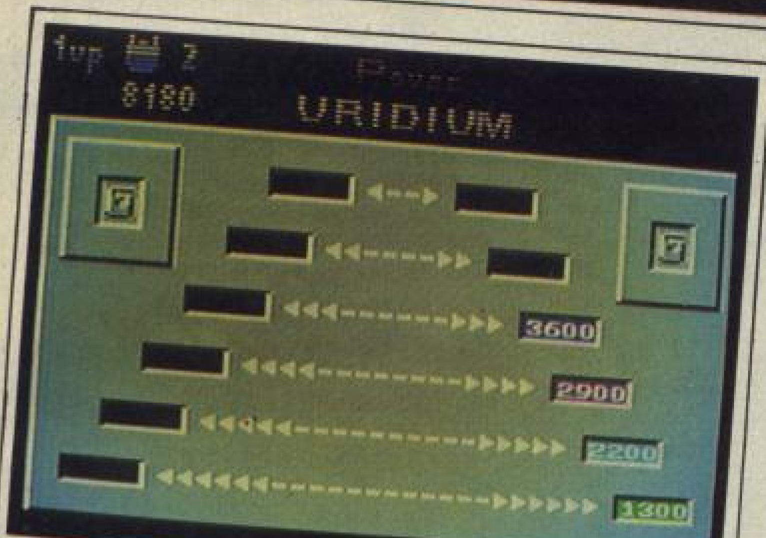
Ship 6 (Gold) — retribution from the fighters is fierce after cratering the Dreadnought's deck.





Super satisfaction and great effects as the Dreadnought dissolves under you.





This is the Fuel Rod Chamber, dubbed the 'futuristic fruit machine bit' where you determine the bonus (at the moment 3,600) to be received after destroying the Dreadnought.

through a horizontally scrolling window which follows the movements of your craft left and right. Aliens of varying description attack in a variety of different formations and should you prove competent enough to completely annihilate a wave, a bonus is awarded after successfully landing. Points are basically acquired by simply killing the nasties, but your score can be further increased by taking out certain ground targets. Some scenery, such as meteor shields and communications aerials, cannot be shot though, and must be flown around as they are too high to fly over. The height of an object can be determined by the length of the shadow it casts.

Homing Mines are occasionally unleashed from the Dreadnoughts flashing generator ports and some deft manoeuvring is required to avoid them as they cannot be shot. Thankfully they self-destruct after four seconds.

If you skillfully survive a set number of alien attack waves the message 'Land Now' flashes up to indicate that you should land on the runway at the far right end of the ship. Failure to heed this warning results in a high speed attack from even deadlier alien craft, which get progressively meaner the longer you refuse to land. On docking with the Dreadnought the display splits and is replaced by a representation of the fuel rod chamber — a sort of futuristic fruit machine. Here you determine the size of the bonus you are to receive for destroying the battleship and this must be done within a short time limit or a life is lost.

As the attacking alien battleships require specific metals to be converted into energy for their interstellar power units they are identified accordingly. For example, the first ship is called Zinc, the second Lead, the third Copper and so on, right up to the fifteenth ship which is called . . . Well that would be telling, wouldn't it.



The most impressive thing about Uridium *is the incredible graphics. They are quite stunning and easily arcade quality with amazing smooth scrolling and bas-relief used to sensational effect. The sprites are superbly defined, the use of colour is exceptional and there are some brilliant special effects throughout the game. Sound is also put to good use as well with a neat tune on the title screen and some whizzo effects within the game itself.* Uridium *isn't just amazing to look at and listen to — it's great fun to play and is one of the most addictive and spectacular shoot em ups yet seen on any home computer.*



Uridium *is truly an impressive game, immaculate in both its execution and conception. The totally amazing graphics are the first thing to strike you, they really are excellent. The game itself is impressive as well and even though not a great fan of shoot 'em ups* Uridium *is still great fun to play. The Manta is very responsive indeed and is pleasure to control, skillful handling providing a similar sort of joy to that on* Defender. *Using software sprites for the ship's laser fire means a lot of bullets. Even so the game stays super slick and smooth throughout. Some of the effects used are very clever indeed especially the boiling away of the ship at the end of the wave. Despite* Uridium *being a shoot em up it's not all mindless violence, knowing the maps of the various Dreadnoughts is essential to get anywhere of note. Overall an excellent game that should be on every 64 owner's software shelf.*

Presentation 99%
Slick in every aspect and many useful options.

Graphics 99%
Incredible high speed, smooth scrolling backgrounds, superlative sprites and exceptional use of colour.

Sound 94%
Great title screen tune and highly effective FX.

Hookability 98%
Highly addictive due to breath taking graphics and simple but rewarding gameplay.

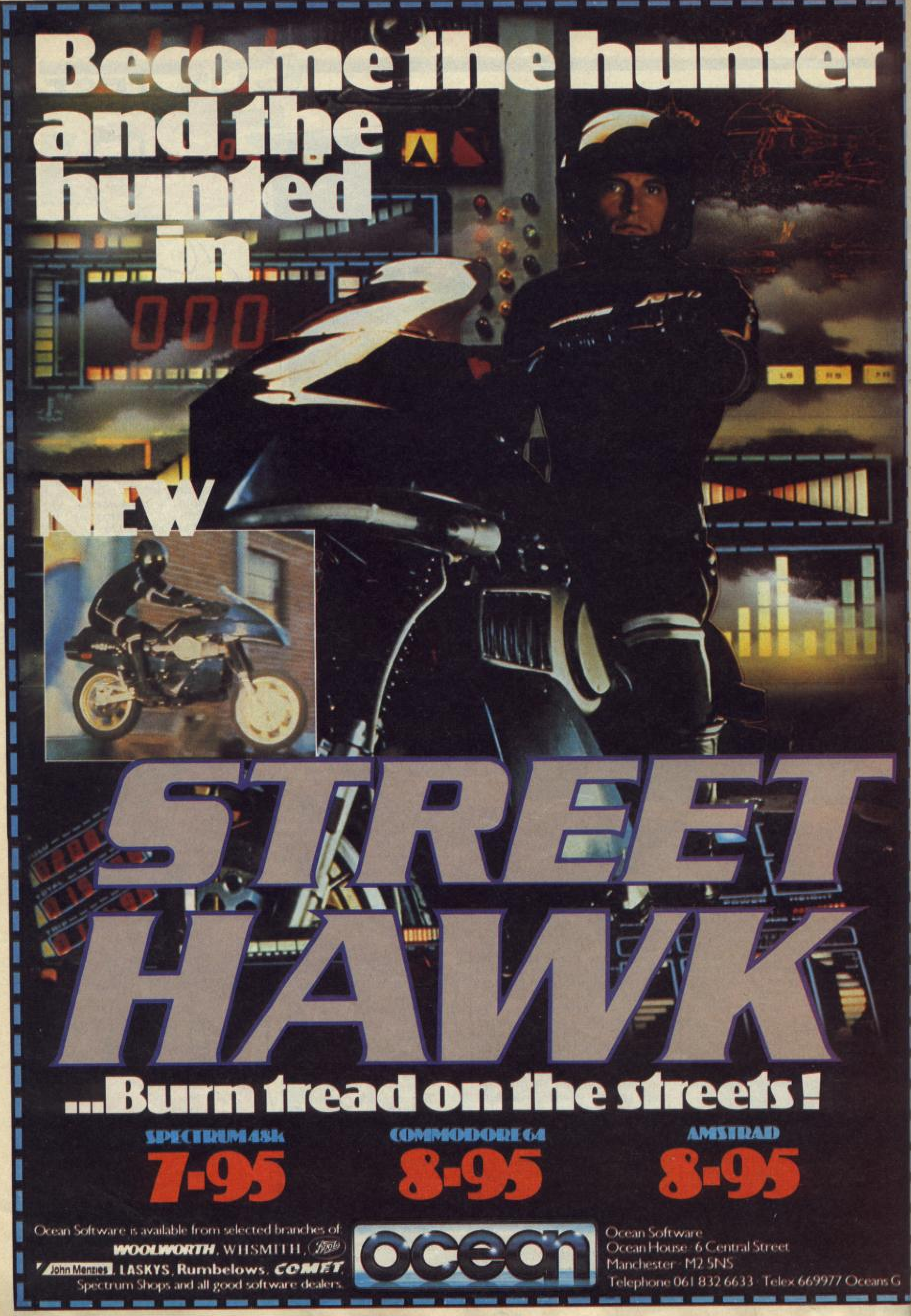
Lastability 92%
Fifteen Dreadnoughts may prove monotonous to complete due to little variation in play, but still an enjoyable game to come back to time after time.

Value For Money 92%
Slightly more expensive than previous Hewson releases but definitely just as worthy.

Overall 94%
Visually awesome, sonically sound, technically stunning and a brilliant shoot em up to boot.

"SHADES OF '2001' "




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ELEKTRA GLIDE BREAKDOWN

little news snippet from our speedy racing correspondent. **English Software** seem to be having some problems with their new, 'ultra fast' racing game *Elektra Glide*. Remember the preview of the Atari version that was done last year to give you a taster? It might have been a fast game, but the process of conversion is slo-o-ow and the Commodore version seems really laid back in its attitude to reaching you 64 owners out there.

Oh well, here are a couple of screen shots for you to stare at during the long, long wait. As you can see, it all looks jolly gripping stuff and (judging from the photos English Software sent us) drove their playtesters completely bananas when they had to play it for hours?!? The Atari version has had a mixed reception here, we'll just have to see how the Commodore version fares next month.





THE NEVER ENDING STORY . . .

Ocean continue to advertise more games — the latest being *Superbowl*, an American football game. It features plenty of animation and the two teams which have made it to Superbowl XX. It should be out by the time you read this . . .

V, based around the smash hit US telly series, sounds like it could be pretty interesting. The game is set in the Visitors' giant spaceship and you play the hero who has to run around and kill off all those nasty lizards before they make lunch of you. According to Ocean the graphics are 'very, very good indeed' and consist of large animated characters. This we look forward to seeing sometime in the not-too-distant future?

Knight Rider Comic Bakery and *Daley's Supertest* should be out about now we were assured . . . jeepers creepers, could this be really true, do wonders ever cease, will my nose ever stop growing?

EVERYONE'S A WINNER BABE, THAT'S THE TRUTH

From our well hungover correspondent.
At the riotous **InDin** (read *Shadowspiel* for more information) the 1985 Newsfield awards were given. These are the awards chosen by the Commodore, Spectrum and Amstrad employees of Newsfield, and there was much controversy and fighting when they were chosen.
Here are the Commodore awards:

Best arcade game: **Paradroid** (Hewson); Best adventure: **Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy** (Infocom); Best strategy game: **Theatre Europe** (PSS); Best sports simulation: **Winter Games** (US Gold); Best music: **Monty on the Run** (Gremlin Graphics); Best alternative software: **Little Computer People** (Activision); Most underrated game: **Pastfinder** (Activision); Best advertisement: **Nodes of Yesod** and **Robin of the Wood** (Odin). We'll just have to see how you readers react in the readers awards of 1985.

ULTIMATE PLAY THE MARKETING AGREEMENT

At last, after many rumours and speculations, **Ultimate** have now confirmed that they have finalised a marketing deal with no other than **US Gold**. Yes, rest easy guys 'n' gals, US Gold will be handling all the marketing and sales and also have the rights to convert Ultimate titles to other computers . . . could this mean that *Knight Lore* will appear on the 64?



Andrew Braybrook receives the Newsfield award for the Best Arcade Game for PARADROID at a recent Hewson Launch luncheon in London.



Andrew Wright graciously accepts the Newsfield award for the most underrated game of the year — PASTFINDER for Activision. Oliver Frey (left) waits to hit him over the head with it and John Phillips (ex-Bug-Byte), the InDin's Master of ceremonies, waits for another victim.



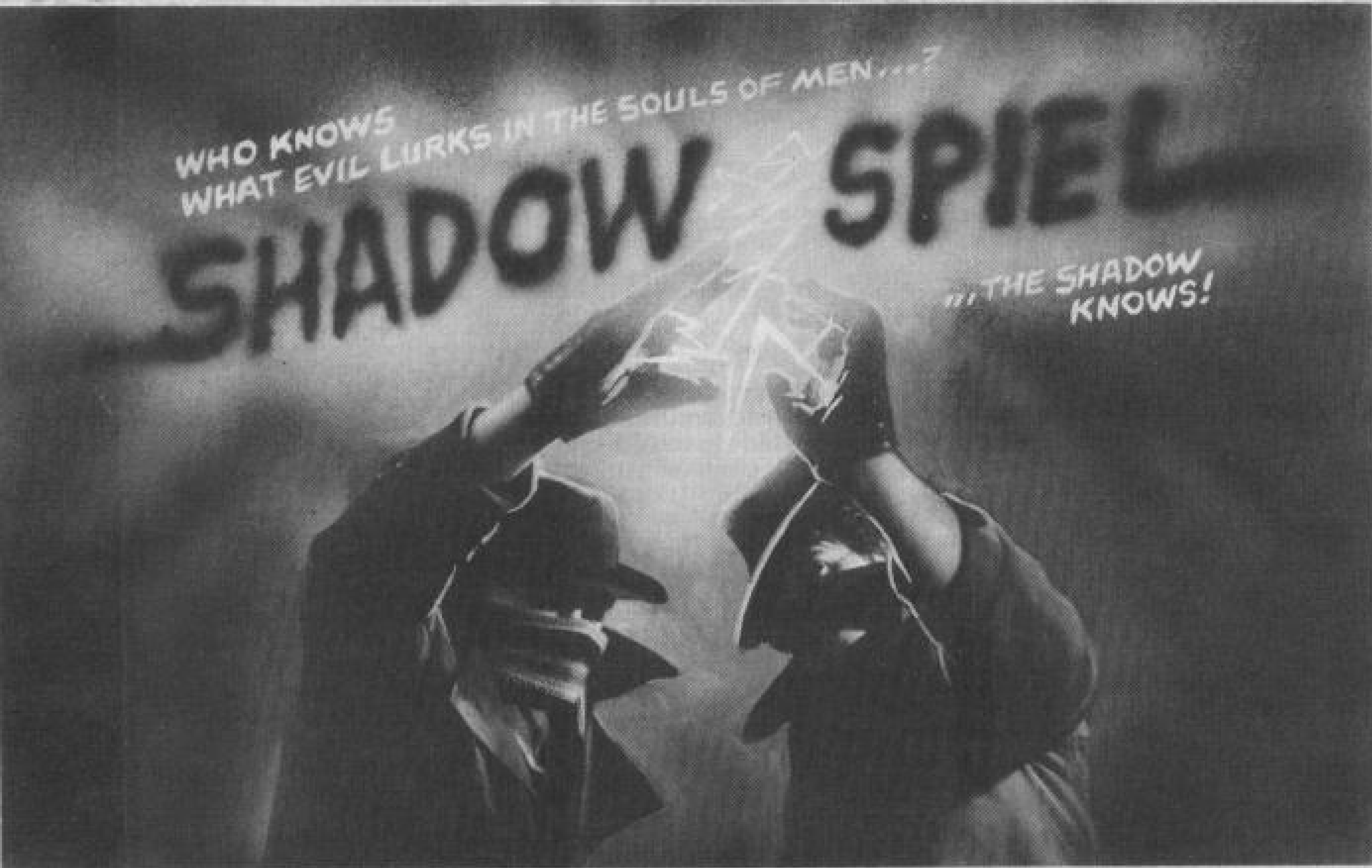


Ian Stewart of Gremlin Graphics takes the award for Best Music from Oliver.

REALTIME AGGRONAUTS

From our very own famous Greek software expert. **Realtime** are at this very moment speedily programming *Argonautica*, a game based around the mythical exploits of those Grecian heroes of old.

The game is a multicharacter arcade adventure played over several scenes of scrolling locations and involves some 'incredibly detailed backgrounds'. Realtime are having big problems in cramming the whole thing into the 64's memory and it could well end up being a two cassette game. Better get your Chitons ready matey.



SEEING INTO THE FUTURE...

The Shadow recently received a visit from **Steve Wilcox**, Big Cheese at **Elite**, to show off pre-production copies of *Bombjack*, Elite's next release for the 64. It's converted from the ever popular arcade game *Bombjack* (a bit surprising that). Though still due for quite a few changes the version shown was quite promising. Also revealed were Elite's plan for their next arcade conversion, *Ghosts and Goblins*. Though not as famous as *Bombjack*, *Ghosts and Goblins* has built up quite a cult following. Look to future issues of ZZAP! for full reviews by our expert (snigger) panel of gamesters.'

HEROES AGAINST HEROIN...

After last year's **SOFTAID** the industry seems to have found another pet charity and this time it's **Off the Hook**. With all the proceeds going towards the fight against drug abuse, a number of software companies have pulled together to create a compilation tape for both Commodore and Spectrum. The Shadow agrees that all this abusing of drugs is terrible and from now on everyone should make the effort to treat them with care. If a compilation tape is to be launched what better than to adopt **Jeff Minter**'s *Yak's Progress*. At the very least I feel the collection of games should include *Psychedelia*. It breaks my heart to think of all those poor drugs being badly treated and it should be universally agreed that everything possible should be done to help them.

SOFTWARE POW POW



Off the Hook was recently launched at the Industry Dinner (InDin to the initiated) at a Park Lane hotel and few weeks ago **The Shadow** found himself at the **Grosvenor House Hotel** rubbing shoulders with the influential and effluential. It was here that the annual software industry back slapping awards were being held with various companies and persons vying for the honour of a Clive to be bestowed upon them. The title **InDin** seemed appropriate considering most of those attending were cowboys.



An interesting highlight in the evening was the presentation of the acronymically named **B**iggest **O**fficial **L**itigous **L**awsuit **I**nvolving **C**omputer **S**ubjects award which went to EMAP for it's legal action against CRASH magazine. The award was collected for EMAP by **Bill Scolding**, editor of *Sinclair User* magazine. Mr Scolding was invited along but since EMAP hadn't purchased a £1000 table the poor man had nowhere to sit. Unable to let a fellow colleague have to stand when most people were having the greatest difficulty staying vertical, a seat was offered at the ZZAP! table and it was from there that Bill Scolding received the award for EMAP. How very ironic.



BREAKING OUT THE BUBBLY!

Another interesting event at the InDin was the auctioning off of a vintage bottle of champagne. The money raised to be used to launch Off the Hook. In a battle to discover who had the largest wallet various companies bid against each other for the honour of having their picture on the front page of **Computer Trade Weekly** supping the said champagne. The trouble was that when it came to everyone getting their wallets out they all looked a bit puny when the Ocean Syndicate slapped their's onto the table. In the end everyone decided to bid together with 14 software houses each giving a thousand pounds.

BUT LO- WHAT IS THIS?

This month's Rubber Fish of Stupidity is awarded to **Rod Cousens** and **GOSH**, co-arrangers of the InDin. Though happy to hand out Clives to various undeserving candidates, in a display of shocking insensitivity **Tony Takoushi** was totally overlooked. The situation is somewhat analagous to the Government's shock decision to leave Bob Geldof unrewarded in the New Years honour's list. It's likely that Mr Takoushi is a personality well known to you through his relentless work against piracy over the last year or so. Piracy is a terrible thing that can starve software producers of much needed profits. Tony Takoushi has seemingly dedicated his life to battling the malnutrition and despair currently being experienced in many leading companies. Though his case is certainly as tragic as Geldof's it seems unlikely that the public outcry will be as great so **The Shadow** has decided to start a campaign to make sure that people get what they deserve, starting with Tony Takoushi.



THE POSITRONIC EYES MISS NOTHING

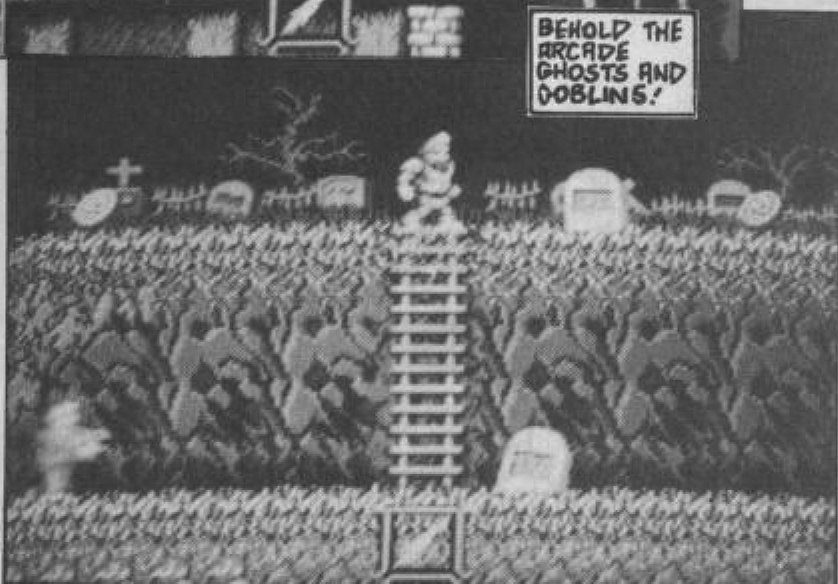
Last month's meld demonstrated the true power of **The Shadow**. True Truth seekers are likely to remember the short story on CCI Action Man reporter, **Francis 'Felix' Jago**. Various minions have reported an interesting conversation between Novagen supremo Bruce Jordan and FJ. Apparently the intrepid journalist was phoning Novagen for some information on *Mercenary* and was put through to Bruce. Upon discovering who the caller was Bruce is reported to have exclaimed 'How's Felix? You're nearly famous now aren't you?'. Obviously Mr Jordan is a truth seeker through and through and is deservedly awarded honourary membership of the Junior Shadow Patrol.



ON THE HUNT FOR JUSTICE!



Being a man of more than meagre fairness, **The Shadow** finds it hard to tolerate any being mistreating others of an inferior nature to themselves. A person who is prone to such tendencies is **Andrew Wright** of Activision. The constant torment of people likening his appearance to Communard's singer Jimmy Sommerville has metamorphosed Activision's chief of Press Public Relations (PPR) into a crazed psychopath. To ease the tension his latest hobby is beating his YTS game testers **Martin Gysh** and **John Davey**. On a recent occasion the two happy-go-lucky lads were blowing smoke into Andrew's hair to make it seem to be on fire. Just a simple prank keeping in tune to Activision's general devil-may-care attitude. Sadly Mr Wright did not see it this way and set upon the pranksters shouting 'Get off you little *(word meaning 'cut turf')*!'. This man is dangerous and must not go unpunished. Any fitting suggestions would be gratefully received. Any punishments fitting the crime will be printed in this column.



BEHOLD THE ARCADE GHOSTS AND GOBLINS!

MORE FUTURE...

The Shadow was recently viewing *The Terminator*, a film starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a nasty robot baddie of on a bender of carnage and mayhem. At the end of the film there's a scene showing a view through the eyes of the robot with all sorts of computer type text rolling up the sides of the screens. Using his power of pause **The Shadow** worked the remote control and noticed that the text rolling up the sides of the screen was, in fact, 6502 assembly code. I suppose Mr Schwarzenegger was having a quiet thought about the good old days.

Talking of metalic meanies, **Thor** are set to release *The Liquidator*, a story about a nasty robot baddie on a bender of carnage and mayhem (sound familiar?). As the hero your job is to restrain the cyborg and give him a good talking too. Also in the offing from Thor is *I.C.U.P.S.*, a space shoot em up in true arcade style. With three ZZAP! Sizzlers behind them any new game from Thor/Odin should be worth looking forward to Hopefully there will be a review of *I.C.U.P.S* next issue.

This month sees the start of **The Shadow**'s Software Cuties section and this month's hot selection sees the appearance of **Mastertronic**'s gorgeous, pouting **Alison Beasley** and **Activision**'s very own **Clare Hirsch** nee Trotter, a woman whose marriage broke a million hearts.





WHO COULD RESIST THE LOVELY ALISON BEAZLEY?

FEAST YOUR EYES...



CUTIE CLARE HIRSCH NEE TROTTER, DOING HER FROG IMPRESSION...

THE TRUTH SEEKERS GATHER...

Well that's it for this month truth seekers as the bonds of melding that form **The Shadow** fail. Remember, a shadow cannot exist without light and **THE SHADOW** is cast by the light of truth. Any information to further the quest for knowledge should be sent to ...



THE SHADOW
c/o ZZAP! 64
P.O. BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

ZZAP! COMP

HO HO HOLOGRAM

Win your very own Hologram in the Lord of the Rings Comp

30 copies of the Adventure Game up for Grabs too!



Hobbits and Competition Minions have a lot in common. We both like the quiet life — much preferring the confines of our nice warm burrows to frenzied activity out there in the great wide world. In my case, the burrow is the ZZAP! broom cupboard (which doesn't exactly boast hot and cold running water, but with a bit of effort a well comfy nest can be made from bog rolls and dusters).

Melbourne House have brought the cast of characters who live in JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy onto the computer screen in part one of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy which should be available on the Commodore any day now.

Visitors to the Melbourne House stand at the Personal Computer World Show last September can't have failed to notice the striking holograms they had on display. Made by Holografix — the firm founded by Mark Eyles and Caroline Hayton of Quicksilva fame — the holograms depict a Ring Wraith, or Nazgul. Now the Show is over, the nice lady at Melbourne House, Paula Byrne, is offering one of these holograms as top prize in this competition. Thirty runners up will also collect a copy of *Lord of the Rings*, the computer game.

Many happy hours of adventuring are guaranteed if you win one of these games — and one lucky adventurer will be able to get into the mood, playing the game while his or her very own Nazgul stares down from the wall.

What you got to do? Easy. Imagine you're a hobbit transported to the twentieth century (that's like, now. Today). Once you got over the initial bewilderment of motorways, juggernauts, television, space ships, telephones and the like, what would be the first thing you'd do? Would you ring Directory Enquiries to see if Gandalf was on the 'phone? Would you try and hitch a lift on Concorde? Maybe you'd get a Commodore and start playing games with a vengeance.

Decide what your first priority as a modern hobbit would be and then draw the scene. Send your painting, drawing, etching, watercolour or photograph to **20th CENTURY HOBBIT, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive by 13th March which is the day of judgement. The most imaginative piece of artwork (with the bestest hobbit picture) will win its creator the Nazgul Hologram, and the next thirty in line, in the opinion of this Minion, will collect copies of the Melbourne House game.



ZZAPBACK

It's not quite a year since ZZAP! 64 was born, but it's over a year since the games in issue 1 were conceived and programmed, so it seemed a good idea to us to take a look back at some of those first reviews and see how not only they but the games in question have survived the test of time. Have the games aged or been superceded by better product? Are they still worth the ratings they were given, and if not why not? Gaz and Jaz, sole survivors of the original ZZAP! team, have only examined the top reviewed games which, in the case of issue 1, numbered ten.



AIRWOLF

Elite

The game of the popular helicopter series certainly caught the eye of our keen eyed, spotty and then-young reviewers. The idea of the game is to enter the caverns of the evil General Zaranov in Airwolf and seek out and pick up the scientists being held prisoner. Poor old Jaz had to be 'forced away from my 64 with this one' whilst Gary cared not that it was a *Fort Apocalypse* derivative, and observed that 'what we have here is an extremely addictive shoot and pick em up'. Bob Wade, then software editor, summed up the whole thing in his usual devil-may-care verbose way: 'a great game'.

I remember playing and playing this and not getting very far at all — it's certainly a tough little game. The graphics are still nice, even by today's standards, and although the playing area is only 9 x 9 screens it has been well planned so it seems twice that size. It's still quite a good game really, and about the best offering from Elite.
JR

About the only thing I remember about *Airwolf* is that it came in late and we only just squeezed it in the first issue. After *Kokotoni Wilf* I expected the worst but was pleasantly surprised by a very good game - although that was then and this is now. And now I don't think so highly of *Airwolf*.
GP



(Jaz) I think perhaps the overall mark should be in the low eighties, but all the other marks seem quite fair.

(Gaz) The presentation was underated by about 20% while the graphics should be lowered by about 15%. In fact both hookability and lastability would look better 10% or so lower as would the value for money rating.

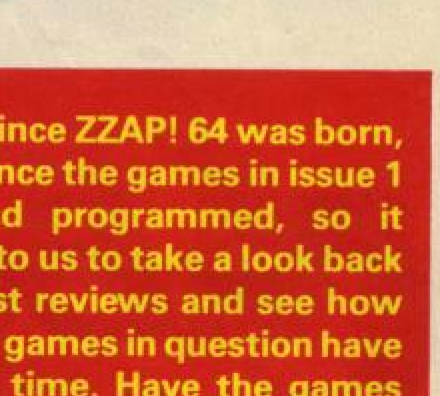
BOUNTY BOB STRIKES BACK

US Gold

The Atari version of *Bounty Bob* arrived long before the Commodore version so we thought 'what the hell, both versions are identical, let's review it'. It's an excellent 25 screen platform game which apart from being brilliantly conceived has heaps of minute features still undiscovered. Our reviewers fairly burbled with delight and the light of the Yeovil was seen to burn brightly long into the night as a result of its horiffically addictive qualities. According to our youthful gamers it seems to come with its own built-in diseases — Gary said that 'once struck by this game you won't recover' and Julian, who's never been known to exaggerate, suffered horribly with 'hot and cold flushes, shaking limbs and hallucinations'. Bob, on the other hand seemed immune to its side effects and only commented on its 'excellence' and 'complexity'.

Ah! My favouritest platform game ever. I still go back to this a year after it was released. The wickedness of some of the traps and puzzles and the immense amount of features really makes this one of the classic 64 games. If it doesn't grace your collection then you should trudge out to your nearest software retailer and buy it now!
JR

I didn't think that much of *Bounty Bob* at first and it took quite a while for me to change my mind, unlike Bob and Julian who were hooked from the start. I still find it as addictive as ever and it's still the best platform game available on the 64.
GP



(Jaz) I think that it was underrated if anything. Hookability and lastability should be turned up a notch and overall should have been well into the nineties.

(Gaz) Perhaps the presentation should be a bit higher — but not much. Otherwise the ratings are fine, although value for money would benefit from a slight boost.

CAULDRON

Palace

At the time *Cauldron* was released, decent arcade adventures on the 64 were few and far between, or so the review claimed. It then went on to describe what is essentially a 180 screen arcade game combining platform and shoot em up elements with a witch in the title role and adventure overtones — or a 'marvellous cross between Defender and a platform game', as Bob Wade succinctly put it. Gary was of a similar opinion and said that Palace Software's Sizzler was 'definitely an enjoyable challenge to novice and proficient arcade adventurer alike.' Julian however, thought it wise

CK!

to offer the somewhat sardonic warning 'Don't play it after midnight!' instead.

It worked well on graphics and content, but on reflection it was just too difficult to play to make it a popular hit. However, I liked its mix of game ideas and I still think it stands up.
JR

Cauldron was one of the first arcade adventures on the 64 and if it was a little easier to play it could be classed as one of the best. Looking back on the review I think we overrated the game as it is too hard and should have been marked down for its unplayability.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
65%	74%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
82%	83%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
73%	87%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
87%	

(Jaz) We slightly overrated the game. Looking at it now I think most ratings (except graphics) should drop 5 to 7%.

(Gaz) Presentation needs a boost of 20% and both hookability and lastability should drop by 10%, maybe 15%, as the game was far too hard. Overall — 10% less sounds about right.

ELITE

Firebird

Elite caused plenty of controversy in the ZZAP! offices. Firebird bought the game up during a weekend when Gazzajaz weren't in Yeovil and the only member of the team who saw it was Bob Wade. He raved over it and it was duly awarded a shiny new Gold Medal, rather unfairly and against the awesome ZZAP! reviewing policies. Nevertheless the review went ahead and Bob using his complete dictionary of superlatives described *Elite* as 'brilliant', 'terriffic' and 'truly a mega-game'. The game offers massive depth as you explore a galaxy of over 2,000 planets and pits you against pirates, the police and other traders as you try to become one of the Elite. It was several months (due to the massive delays in production) before the terrible twain saw the game, and when they did they didn't seemed as impressed as Bob was . . .

My first impressions when I saw Elite was 'Oh no, this shouldn't have been a gold medal game'. On playing it those fears were further strengthened — the graphics are horrible and flickery and the game plays so-o-o-o slowly it's awful. Oh well, ZZAP! readers seemed to like it, although I never really enjoyed the experience.
JR

On seeing this so called 'game of a lifetime' for the first time I laughed. A lot. Then I cried, again a lot, but not physically, more inwardly — at the obvious mistake. I can't believe Bob rated this game so highly. While the BBC version was enjoyable to play the 64 conversion was most certainly not. I didn't like it when it was first released and I like it even less now.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
94%	87%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
91%	95%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
52%	98%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
95%	

(Jaz) At 95% the game is tremendously overrated — low eighties would make me feel happier. The other ratings should be lowered by at least 10% apart from the sound, which was massively underrated.

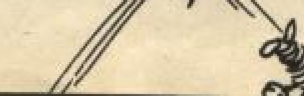
(Gaz) The graphics should de finitely be lowered by about 30% along with hookability, lastability and value for money by around 20%. However, the sound is very good and should be in the high eighties.

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

Beyond

This classic graphic adventure which has no less than 4,000 locations and a picture for each certainly tickled the fancy of the team and showed that contrary to common belief, they do have enough grey matter to cope with complicated games. Bob thought the game to be 'truly an epic' and Jools reckoned it would 'have 64 owners up until the dawn chorus'. Gary too though it was rather good and recommended it to 'adventurers and strategists alike'. Apparently the ZZAP! readers didn't seem to agree and Beyond announced that they weren't going to convert the other two titles in the trilogy. Since then 'due to popular demand' they have decided to release *Doomdark's Revenge* and it should be out very soon.

I really enjoyed playing the game when it first came out, but regrettably never really had the time to return to it and have a bash at solving the thing. The amount of locations and the ▶


"THINGIE WASN'T YET!"

massive number of pictures make this a real winner — I'm looking forward to Doomdark's.
JR

While I found *Lords of Midnight* enjoyable to play when it was first released, it isn't the case now. It's still a very good game but not something I would go back to very often.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
96%	95%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
83%	84%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
00%	92%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
91%	

(Jaz) I'm quite happy with the ratings . . .

(Gaz) I'd knock down the hookability and lastability by a few percent, maybe more on the latter, and the overall rating would be in the low eighties.

PASTFINDER

Activision

This was recently awarded the title of 'The Most Underrated Game of the Year' by the ZZAP! team. It's a vertical shoot em up with a difference which has you leaping across a very surreal landscape in a manoeuverable and oddly shaped craft in attempt to pick up and deliver artifacts. Everyone seemed well captivated by this oddity and they all went on to explain that a book shouldn't be judged by its cover and that this one was a classic case of what might just happen . . .

This was one of the best games of the year in my eyes, and one which was sadly overlooked by many. The graphics are excellent and the depth of gameplay superb. It's still great by today's standards and if you're looking for an unusual and brilliant shoot em up then have a search around for this.
JR

I would say that at the time we underrated *Pastfinder* quite a bit as did most people. It doesn't seem as impressive as it did this time last year, but it's still an excellent shoot em up all the same and is worthy of attention.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
83%	66%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
84%	75%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
48%	91%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
85%	

(Jaz) This is still very underrated in my opinion! Nineties if anything for the overall percentage, graphics up a few marks and hook and lastability (especially hook) up a fair bit.

(Gaz) As the game stands today I would leave the ratings roughly as they are, although hookability could do with a small boost and so could overall.

SHADOWFIRE

Beyond

This icon driven adventure was another game which tested the brains of our intrepid reviewers. Gary was seen mooning about for several days prior the review trying to work out how to tackle the encyclopedia sized instructions sent to him . . . poor lad, he'd only been in the reviewing business for a week or so! Still, cope with it he did and the team seemed to enjoy trying to rescue the ambassador Kryxix by controlling the five members of the Enigma Force (either that or they couldn't understand it and only pretended that they did).

I did like playing this, but in retrospect I think that it was the superb graphics which seduced me — the game itself is rather boring.
JR

Although I never solved *Shadowfire*, I enjoyed playing it a great deal. I found the graphics and sound very impressive and would say we underrated the latter at the time.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
93%	94%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
92%	88%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
82%	93%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
91%	

(Jaz) I think that the ratings should have been more in the eighties, especially lastability.

(Gaz) I would knock all of the ratings down by 10% (ish).

SPY HUNTER

US Gold

This arcade conversion produced many fruity outpourings from the team. The game is quite simple — drive along a vertically scrolling road and shoot or bump the many hostile cars travelling the same route. 'A fantastic conversion' quoth Robert Wade whilst Gary chose 'compelling stuff' to sum up his feelings. Julian called it a 'superb arcade blast em, bump em, crash em all action shoot em up' which, oddly enough, seems to describe the game reasonably well.

I really enjoyed playing this, but like most arcade games it's hookable effect is only very short term. The other niggle was that it was too easy to play, especially when compared with the arcade version.
JR

On reflection I think we overrated *Spy Hunter*. While it was fun to play initially, the novelty soon wore thin and I didn't find myself playing it too often. And then there was that awful bug . . .

GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
61%	67%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
66%	91%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
73%	87%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
87%	

(Jaz) Hmmm. Hookability should be about 10% less and lastability down by at least 20%. The same goes for the overall rating — the game seems quite primitive when looking at it again.

(Gaz) The sound rating should be a lot lower, say 20% or so, as should hookability and lastability at 15% and 25% less respectively. Overall would be around 20% less.

SUPER HUEY

US Gold

This excellent helicopter flight simulation really caught the fancy of 'the guys', and Rockford too. The simulation has three different flight missions (combat, rescue and exploration) and a flight instruction course to help you through any initial difficulties. Gary told readers that 'this is undoubtedly one of the best flight simulators on the 64 for under £30' and Bob commented on the 'wonderful action sequences'. 'Superb and novel' was Julian's thoughts while Rockford squeaked 'hey, it's a lot better than *Combat Lynx*' from the confines of his margin.

There's a distinctive feeling of exhilaration every time I play this — it's still one of my favourite simulators. The graphics are great and the sound of the helicopter engine superb. We failed to spot some of the bugs in the program, but they don't really detract the game.
JR

I thought this was a brilliant flight simulation when I first played it, but my enthusiasm has diminished somewhat since. The sound FX are still very good though.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
86%	72%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
87%	82%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
78%	92%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
87%	

(Jaz) The game has stood the test of time and in my eyes the ratings should stay as they are. Maybe the sound was underrated — it is excellent.

(Gaz) The graphics I would lower by 15%, the sound is about right but hookability and lastability should be lowered by around 5% and 15% respectively. Overall — about 10% less.

TIR NA NOG

Gargoyle Games

This arcade adventure with a difference puts you into the moccasins of Culchainn on his quest to re-unite and then activate the Seal of Calum. The main character is huge and superbly animated as he plods around the landscape. Julian called it 'a REAL arcade adventure' and Gary said that it was a 'true computer movie'. Bob's rather ambiguous comment was summed up 'a delightful delve into mythology'.

Looking back on Tir Na Nog *I have a strong feeling that it was a case of nice graphics, shame about the game. The whole thing is terribly slow to play and gets rather boring, even after a short period of time.*
JR

The graphics haven't aged a bit although the game has and probably wouldn't appeal as much. I think we rated it fairly on the whole, apart from lastability which should have been a bit less. Otherwise no complaints.
GP

PRESENTATION	ORIGINALITY
83%	87%
GRAPHICS	**HOOKABILITY**
88%	79%
SOUND	**LASTABILITY**
6%	91%
VALUE FOR MONEY	
87%	

(Jaz) I don't like the hookability and lastability ratings — they should both be about 20-25% lower and the game seems only worth about 70% these days.

(Gaz) The graphics mark is still valid but hookability needs to be lowered by a few percent and lastability by a bit more — say 15% less. The overall rating should be about 10% less.

UPDATE:
Cross had struck a bargain to deliver a working space vessel to Vilgarre. If he failed, Vilgarre would kill the surviving passengers of Cross's ship, if he succeeded, Vilgarre would take the ship and kill everyone anyway – not exactly a rosy future. The present was pretty bad too – finding a ship on a decadent world of a decaying Dyson System made needles in haystacks look very easy…

THE TERMINAL MAN



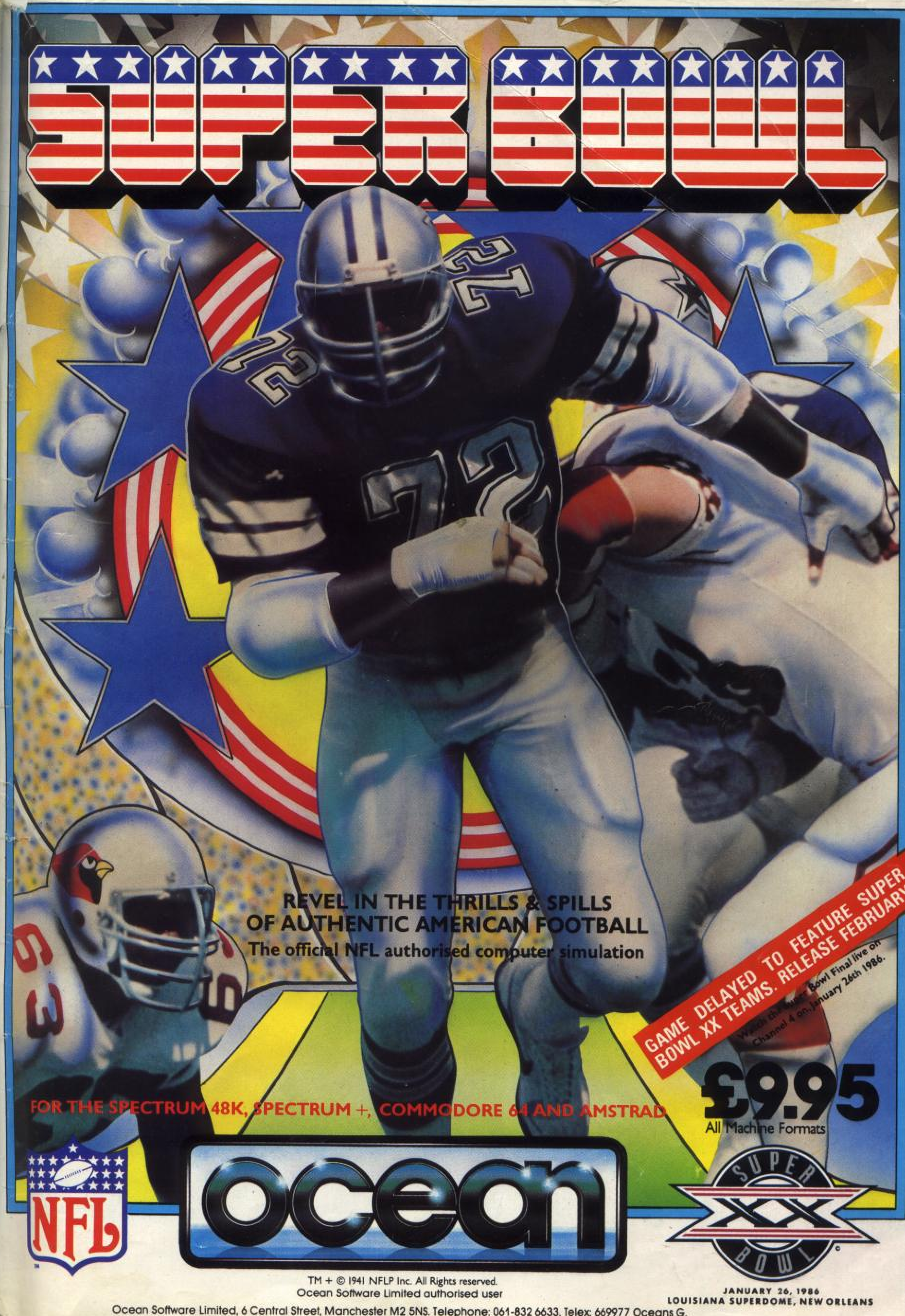


STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


HOURS LATER, THE DESCENT LED TO A WIDE LEDGE, ONE KILOMETRE BELOW THE RIM...
CROSS, IS THAT A SETTLEMENT ON THE WALL? DOWN WHERE THOSE BIRDS ARE FLYING?
YES, IT IS A SETTLEMENT, BUT THOSE ARE NOT BIRDS...
THEY'RE INHABITANTS! RIDING THE CONSTANT UPDRAUGHT FROM THE LAVA — THE MOST NATURAL FORM OF TRANSPORT. HUMAN INGENUITY NEVER CEASES TO AMAZE ME...
I'D WORRY MORE ABOUT HUMAN AGGRESSION IF I WERE YOU — THEY ARE NOT FRIENDLY!
NATURALLY — WE ARE ABOVE THEM THEREFORE WE ARE A THREAT — IT'S THE FIRST RULE OF AERIAL COMBAT
— AND SINCE SOME ARE STILL BELOW US...
WE CONTROL THE GAME!
CROSS' METABOLISM WAS A BIZARRE MIXTURE OF HUMAN, COMPUTER AND VIRUS. THE COMPUTER PART OF HIM JUDGED ANGLES, RATES OF DESCENT AND...
UURGH?!
AARGH!
— HIS COMPUTER HAD ONCE CONTROLLED AN INTERSTELLAR LINER —
NO-OOOOO!
— HANDLING A PRIMITIVE SAILWING IN COMBAT CAME EASY — AND DEADLY!



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